United Nations S/PV.4726 (Resumption 1)

Security Council

Fifty-eighth year

Provisional

4726th meeting

Thursday, 27 March 2003, 9.30 a.m.
New York

President	Mr. Traoré	(Guinea)
Members	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou
	Chile	Mr. Valdés
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Germany	Mr. Pleuger
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Pakistan	Mr. Akram
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Spain	Mr. Arias
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

The situation between Iraq and Kuwait

Letter dated 24 March 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/362)

Letter dated 24 March 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/363)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

03-29764 (E)

The meeting resumed at 9.55 a.m.

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of the Dominican Republic, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Francisco Timos (Dominican Republic), Mr. Al Hasayen (Jordan), Mr. Baraliyev (Kyrgyzstan), Mr. Mahendran (Sri Lanka) and Mr. Gutteres (Timor-Leste) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members, I wish to reiterate to all speakers to limit their statements to no more than five minutes, I repeat, no more than five minutes, in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously.

I now give the floor to the representative of Liechtenstein.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): On earlier occasions, we have expressed the opinion that it is the obligation of the Council to exhaust all peaceful means available before resorting to the authorization of the use of force and that only the Council can bestow legitimacy on an armed intervention. We thus deeply regret that military action has been initiated without explicit authorization by the Council. At the same time, we are not of the view that this constitutes a failure of the Council, much less of the Organization as a whole.

As a small State, we are particularly concerned that the Council and international law have been bypassed on a question of such magnitude and believe that this has wider ramifications which will and must be discussed. However, given the very concrete and urgent needs in Iraq, the Council is challenged to engage in very concrete actions at this particular moment. The challenge before the Council today consists in particular of the large-scale humanitarian crisis that is unfolding at frightening speed in Iraq. While international humanitarian law is clear on the responsibility for the civilian population in the current situation, it is also our view that the United Nations must play an essential role in this respect and that humanitarian assistance should be coordinated under its auspices, as soon as the circumstances on the ground allow for such coordination.

Against that background, we thus welcome the initiative of the Secretary-General for an early resumption of the oil for food programme for the benefit of the Iraqi people. We realize that the resumption of the oil for food programme has sensitive political and legal implications. But we do believe that it is the obligation of the Council to place the plight of the Iraqi people at the centre of its considerations and regain quickly its unity, which will also be essential for securing a central role for the Organization in shaping a peaceful future for Iraq, based on the principles of territorial integrity and sovereignty. We would be in a very difficult position to explain a lack of unity in the Council with regard to humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi people and are therefore encouraged by the progress that was made in consultations on the issue.

The humanitarian situation of the Iraqi population is at the heart of our concerns. The Government of Liechtenstein decided earlier this week to give a total of more than $100,000 to the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and an additional contribution may be forthcoming shortly. We are thus ready to contribute to the joint effort of the international community to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people.

While we can contribute to this end, it is only the warring parties that are in a position to prevent the suffering of the civilian population. The strict observance of international humanitarian law, and the Geneva Conventions in particular, will go a long way towards ensuring this goal. It is the obligation of the parties to the conflict to strictly adhere to all these established standards, in particular those regarding the prohibition to target or otherwise abuse civilians and the obligation to grant full access to humanitarian organizations.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Canada.

Mr. Heinbecker (Canada) (*spoke in French*): We meet at a dark hour. The Government of Canada had hoped that a compromise would be possible and that the Iraqi regime could have been disarmed without recourse to war. But war is here. As a result, our main concern must be the plight of the victims of war.

No one, civilian or soldier, combatant or non-combatant, is immune to the ravages of war. We express our condolences to those who have experienced loss during this conflict.

In this Council, our common humanity compels us to put people first, to focus our energies on protecting them and helping them to meet and overcome the challenges they face in the days ahead. Our first duty is to meet the urgent human needs of the Iraqi people, who have been victimized by the brutality of their own Government for too long.

(*spoke in English*)

The Security Council has on several occasions committed itself to protecting civilians in armed conflict, including in particular women and children at risk. Every effort must be made to avoid civilian casualties. The Council has also emphasized the obligation of parties to a conflict to ensure the safety, security and freedom of movement of United Nations and humanitarian personnel. The Council has underscored the need for safe and unimpeded access to civilian populations at risk. Furthermore, the Council has urged all parties to conflicts, including neighbouring countries, to comply strictly with their obligations under international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law.

We appeal to all concerned to fulfil those undertakings. We particularly appeal to neighbouring countries to do everything in their power to facilitate immediate, full, safe and unhindered access by humanitarian aid agencies to those in need.

We commend the courage and the commitment of humanitarian aid personnel, including those of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations, who are braving the very significant dangers of war to continue their operations in support of the people of Iraq.

We also call upon neighbouring countries to respect international law and to shelter those refugees who have no alternative but to flee across international borders.

We have only begun to see the potential humanitarian implications of the current crisis, including movements of internally displaced persons. And we know that the longer and more destructive the war is, the greater the needs will be. We therefore urge the Council to adapt the oil for food programme without delay. The programme can contribute significantly to meeting the Iraqi people's pressing needs.

Despite the efforts of many inside and outside the Security Council, including Canada, the United Nations was not able to unite to disarm Saddam Hussain. However, we now have another opportunity to find the unity of purpose that eluded us before.

The people of Iraq will soon face the challenge of rebuilding their country in the wake both of inevitably destructive war and of the deprivation and suffering they have endured for years. We believe that the Council must provide the mandate for that reconstruction effort. Furthermore, we believe that the United Nations system as a whole should be centrally engaged and should offer both leadership and its proven expertise in ensuring that the effort to help the Iraqi people rebuild their country is one in which all members of the international community can participate.

I would now like to say a word about the laws of war. We appeal to all parties to respect their obligations under the Geneva Conventions with regard to the conduct of conflict. Prisoners of war must not be used for propaganda purposes. Civilians must not be used as human shields. Schools and hospitals must remain off limits to war.

When I spoke before the Council on 19 February on behalf of the Canadian Government, I urged the Council to keep the welfare of the Iraqi people at the heart of its deliberations. I make that appeal again today. There is no more noble and humane purpose that the Council can now serve than to help the people of Iraq. Canada commits to joining with others in meeting the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people and in working with them to rebuild their country.

In that regard, I am pleased to inform the Council that the Government of Canada has decided to commit approximately $70 million for humanitarian assistance to the people of Iraq.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Marshall Islands, on whom I now call.

Mr. Capelle (Marshall Islands): It is my honour to address this open meeting of the Security Council. I would like to express my thanks to you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting and for once again giving small delegations such as my own an opportunity to participate in this crucial debate.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands is a country of peace-loving people. Both our people and our lands have suffered from the ongoing effects of weapons of mass destruction. We have witnessed first-hand the absolute devastation that can be unleashed by such weapons. For that reason, we believe that the disarmament of the Iraqi regime is an urgent priority. We also support the ultimate goals of the current operation in Iraq, namely, to ensure Iraqi compliance with its disarmament obligations and to restore the sovereignty of the country to its people.

The devastation of war is becoming increasingly evident to all of us as we watch events unfold in Iraq. The focus now needs to turn to the humanitarian requirements of the people of Iraq. We therefore urge the Security Council to do everything in its power to ensure that humanitarian aid is delivered quickly and effectively to those who so desperately need it. Our energies must be focused on alleviating the suffering of the Iraqi people.

At this difficult and turbulent time our thoughts are with the coalition forces, and especially with the young men and women of the Marshall Islands who serve in the United States armed forces that are stationed in Iraq. We wish them all a safe and speedy return. Our thoughts and condolences are also with all of those who have lost loved ones in this conflict.

We hope and pray for a swift resolution of this conflict, and look forward to the establishment of a new and democratic Iraq free of weapons of mass destruction — free for its people to live in peace.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Uruguay, on whom I now call.

Mr. Paolillo (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): My country's position with regard to its steadfast commitment to defending the international legal order, its attachment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and its traditional adherence to settling disputes peacefully has already been clearly set forth in my statement during the Council's previous open debate, held prior to the beginning of military action. The purpose of my statement today is to associate ourselves with those countries that believe that the absolute priority issue now is to address the humanitarian situation of the Iraqi people as fully and as promptly as possible.

Without prejudice to the political and legal debate surrounding the question of restoring international peace and security, we believe that, today more than ever, the Council should commit itself to promoting mechanisms that will ensure that the most pressing needs can be met, in particular in the areas of medicine and food. The Secretary-General should be given broad powers and sufficient discretion to restart the oil for food programme or to establish an alternative mechanism to ensure effective collective action in this regard.

In that connection, we should make full use of the agencies and bodies of the United Nations system with technical experience and legal jurisdiction, in order to ensure the greatest efficiency, speed and coordination of efforts. The work of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees and of such organizations as the Red Cross and the Red Crescent are extremely important. We should therefore strengthen and fully support their efforts. The Government of Uruguay has already taken steps to act and has contacted the competent offices of the United Nations in order to obtain information regarding the most effective way our country can help provide for the basic needs of the Iraqi people.

Finally, allow me to say, in the strongest possible terms, that all the norms of international humanitarian law must be strictly observed.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of Thailand.

Mr. Kasemsarn (Thailand): It is indeed most unfortunate and regrettable that war has broken out, but, as the Secretary-General said last week, it is time to confront the realities of the present. Regardless of the causes of this war, the undeniable reality is that hundreds of thousands of civilians are suffering as a result of it.

Our immediate attention must now be focused on alleviating the plight and suffering of these innocent civilians, particularly women and children. What we need at this crucial juncture is a coalition of the compassionate — a coalition of the giving — to mobilize and coordinate the provision of humanitarian assistance to the people of Iraq. It is incumbent on the United Nations, with the full support of the international community, to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Iraq in a timely manner in order to protect the innocent, especially the most vulnerable groups, including women, children and the elderly, and to limit their exposure to and the impact of the devastating consequences of war. And we do hope that this war will end quickly so that the Iraqi people can rebuild their lives and dignity in an environment of enduring peace and freedom.

What is needed are rapid and well-coordinated efforts to ensure that humanitarian relief reaches the affected Iraqi population. Thailand commends the Secretary-General's initiatives to help plan and implement humanitarian assistance programmes for the Iraqi people, including adjustments to the oil for food programme. We are pleased that the Security Council is considering this important issue of humanitarian assistance in an active and urgent manner. We hope that these efforts will soon bear fruit so that humanitarian assistance will no longer be delayed. Thailand, on its part, stands ready to join this coalition for humanitarian assistance and will work with the United Nations and others to help alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people and eventually to assist in the reconstruction of Iraq.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of Lithuania.

Mr. Šerkšnys (Lithuania): Lithuania has associated itself with the statement that was made on behalf of the European Union yesterday.

Lithuania has always spoken out for the peaceful resolution of conflicts. We regret the breakdown of the diplomatic efforts of the Security Council, yet we have also stood by the resolute opinion that no one shall be allowed to flout Security Council resolutions. Saddam Hussain's regime has been squandering the international community's patience for 12 years.

Our hope is that the conflict will end swiftly and that the loss of human life, suffering and destruction will be minimal. Our Parliament decided last Tuesday to offer medical and logistics personnel to the coalition forces. These specialists will also be essential in providing humanitarian relief to the Iraqi people.

Reconstructing and building a prosperous and peaceful Iraq will be a challenging task. The experience, capabilities and global reach of the United Nations in the coordination of assistance in post-conflict States can hardly be superseded. Lithuania is ready to contribute to a humanitarian settlement in the post-conflict period, closely coordinating its actions with the appropriate international institutions.

Once again, I reiterate that we associate ourselves with the European Union's position on this complex issue.

In times of grave crisis, it is vital for the international community to maintain unity and a sense of common objectives. We must profit from the vast United Nations potential. It is also important that the United States and Europe work hand in hand to secure the vital Euro-Atlantic link, seeking solutions to questions of strategic importance for all mankind.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of Slovakia.

Ms. Novotná (Slovakia): My delegation joins previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on conducting the business of the Security Council with great skill and wisdom. The same compliments go to the German delegation, which presided over this body in the month of February.

We appreciate the decision of the Security Council to provide the floor to the wider United Nations membership to express their views in today's open debate. Slovakia has aligned itself with the statement of the Greek Presidency of the European Union. Nevertheless, we have asked for the floor to make a few additional comments in our national capacity on the issue of the utmost gravity before us: the situation in Iraq.

We deeply regret that diplomacy on Iraq has failed and that the Council was unable to bridge its divisions on such a crucial issue. We are convinced that, although the situation is serious, it is not permanent. Like others, Slovakia wished that political tools had made the difference and enabled us to avoid a crisis. We regret that the path of unity in the Security Council, which provided so well for the international community nearly five months ago, could not be followed.

At present, our foremost priority should dwell on dealing with the immediate humanitarian needs of the Iraqi population. My delegation is pleased to note that the parties involved have recognized the crucial role that the United Nations and its system should play in coping with the humanitarian situation in Iraq. Now is the moment for the Security Council to renew its unity and put aside the differences that have marked its consideration of the issue of disarmament.

The most urgent consideration should be given to the proposals made by the Secretary-General regarding necessary modifications to the oil for food programme in order to make the proceeds from Iraqi oil available for specific humanitarian purposes. This would be precisely in line with the principle that the natural resources of Iraq should be used strictly for the needs and benefits of the Iraqi people. We encourage the Security Council to swiftly proceed with negotiating and adopting a decision that would enable the Secretary-General to effectively manage the oil for food programme in order to satisfy the humanitarian situation that is rapidly evolving on the ground.

The people of Iraq are facing a difficult period today. They are confronted with the consequences of policies they have not had a real chance to influence. The Iraqi regime undoubtedly placed political objectives before humanitarian concerns. Slovakia believes that the people of Iraq deserve a better future than what they have experienced so far. Their interests will be best served by their being able to live in conditions of political and economic stability and peaceful and friendly relations with their neighbours in the region, while ensuring that the country's natural resources are truly used for their own benefit. Such a prospect would enjoy broad international support and respect. In this regard, we stress the utmost importance of the continued commitment of the international community to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq.

Slovakia, for its part, is ready to contribute to solving the current crisis in Iraq and alleviating the plight of the people of the affected region. On the basis of a bilateral agreement concluded with the Kuwaiti Government, we dispatched to Kuwait a unit of experts highly skilled in the detection of and protection against biological and chemical agents, as well as other types of weapons of mass destruction. The unit has been given a clear mandate: to assist in humanitarian and rescue operations in cases when weapons of mass destruction are used or their use is suspected.

In conclusion, I would like to subscribe to the view that the United Nations must continue to play a central role during and after the current crisis. We commend the ongoing efforts of the Secretary-General to actively engage the relevant parts of the United Nations system in early humanitarian contingency planning.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of El Salvador.

Mr. Lagos Pizzati (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is regrettable that the intransigence of the Government of Iraq in complying with international obligations imposed on it by the Security Council since 1991, as a consequence of its own unlawful actions, which were an assault on the independence and territorial integrity of a Member State of our Organization, in flagrant violation of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, has led to the situation that we are now witnessing.

After 12 years, in the course of which the Iraqi regime defied and failed to comply with the binding decisions of the Security Council, the Council and the international community gave it one final opportunity to fully eliminate all its weapons of mass destruction, failing which it would face serious consequences. It is regrettable that even despite the intense international pressure brought to bear, the Government of Iraq did not demonstrate total, active and unconditional cooperation reflecting a real political will to comply with its obligations.

It is deplorable that the Government of Iraq did not heed or fully accept all the appeals of Member States to avoid armed conflict and the further suffering of its people. It is a position and conduct that make it directly responsible for the current situation in the country.

In light of the reality of war, my delegation can only hope that the conflict will end as soon as possible to avoid greater material destruction and, especially, the loss of human lives so that the United Nations and the international community can devote their resources and efforts to assisting reconstruction and rehabilitation in Iraq.

While it is regrettable that the Security Council has not maintained the consensus and unity that it

reached in adopting resolution 1441 (2002) on a question of general concern, the current international situation must serve as a basis for looking towards the future.

Historical experience has taught us that after profound crises and conflicts, societies re-emerge with creativity through new and better initiatives that benefit their peoples. One example of this is the origin and creation of the United Nations.

We concur with statements that the immediate challenge of the United Nations should be in the area of efforts for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Iraq, through the adoption of a comprehensive programme of humanitarian assistance. In addition, Member States must take on the task, in a pragmatic way, of rebuilding and strengthening unity and trust in the United Nations system, especially the multilateral mechanism for collective security. The actions of the world Organization should not give rise to any doubt about its effectiveness, impartiality or legality, through a process of decision-making based on consensus and the shared interests of all Member States.

I wish to conclude by expressing the importance and urgency of continuing the oil for food programme, and I offer our support for the Secretary-General in the preparation of a programme responding to the needs of the Iraqi people.

I believe that it is appropriate to reaffirm here that the Government of El Salvador has, within its possibilities, offered to participate in a multilateral effort to assist in alleviating the humanitarian needs of Iraq in the post-war period.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Shobokshi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): The world currently finds itself in an extremely dangerous situation. Our Arab and Islamic region is faced with a war that has grave repercussions and negative consequences for the international system and international relations. War is proof of the failure of diplomacy and the failure of the United Nations and the Security Council, in particular, to undertake the tasks entrusted to them for the preservation of international peace and security. This war will foment hostility, hatred, violence and extremism. It will also lead to many disasters that the world would do well to avoid.

No sooner had it become apparent that war was on the horizon than the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia began efforts, individually or with our Arab and Muslim brothers and with the international community, to reach a peaceful settlement. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia became active on the Arab, Islamic and international levels. It proposed clear, logical and just ideas based on the absolute need for Iraq's full compliance with Security Council resolutions and its full cooperation with the inspectors and on the need to give diplomatic efforts a chance to reach a peaceful solution to the crisis.

Regrettably, despite all the efforts to reach a peaceful and logical settlement of the Iraqi crisis, and despite international opposition to a destructive war, the sword has fallen. The two parties realized right from the earliest moments of the war that they would suffer great losses. War is a loss for both the victor and the vanquished. We now know all too well the horrendous scale of destruction in Iraq and the loss of life of thousands of innocent civilians. We know that lethal weapons do not distinguish between belligerents and non-belligerents. Nor do they avoid hurting children, women and the elderly. People with vision realize this tragic reality and understand the obvious need to favour wisdom and to study in depth the regional and international dimensions and repercussions of this crisis.

Reason dictates that military operations against Iraq be brought to a halt, that good offices and diplomatic efforts be resumed and that diplomatic work within the United Nations be resumed to solve the problem within a legitimate international context. Our work should be oriented towards preserving Iraq's national security and its civil institutions, which will break down under the pressure of war. We are all aware of the humanitarian and environmental devastation that this war will unleash against Iraq, not to mention the staggering political and economic costs.

In line with our firm, principled position, we categorically oppose the occupation of Iraq. We believe that the Iraqi people are capable of assuming responsibility for governing their country and do not need to be governed by foreign authorities. The sins of the Iraqi Government and its failure to comply fully with Security Council resolutions during the past 12 years should not be visited upon the fraternal Iraqi people, which has suffered excessively and for so long. The Iraqi people aspires to reaching a peaceful

solution, sparing Iraq and the world a war that no one really wants. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia insists on the unity, independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Iraq, and demands an end to the war and the withdrawal of foreign forces outside Iraqi international borders.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, acting upon its responsibilities by contributing to humanitarian efforts and in keeping with the directives of its leaders, provided full-scale humanitarian assistance to more than 24,000 displaced persons, including camps, food and medical assistance. This is the first of many steps to take care of any urgent needs, to alleviate the humanitarian suffering of Iraqi citizens resulting from military operations. Centres have been established in the region of Ar ar on Iraq's international border. The Kingdom has already declared the region open for that purpose. We have also contacted international relief agencies, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Committee of the Red Cross through the assistance of the Saudi Red Crescent Society to coordinate and deliver assistance to those in dire need after taking necessary legal measures through the United Nations.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia believes that the Security Council is the party that should decide whether or not Iraq has any weapons of mass destruction. We must respect the principles of international law that have governed our world for more than half a century. These principles and international legitimacy protect the international community from any erosion of the bases of international relations.

The Middle East region cannot tolerate the repercussions of another destructive war. We need to put an end to the hotbeds of tension in the Middle East and work to make peace and security prevail. We must encourage cooperation, support development and enhance progress. Therefore, we demand that there be serious and effective action in the coming stage to reach an immediate and just solution to the Middle East problem and the occupied Arab territories on the basis of the Arab initiative anchored in the principle of land for peace, Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories and the establishment of a Palestinian State alongside Israel, with East Jerusalem its capital.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of the Federated States of Micronesia.

Mr. Nakayama (Federated States of Micronesia): We have gathered here in the wake of the terrible events unfolding in Iraq. Only one week ago a war started that nobody wanted — neither the coalition fighting in Iraq nor the Iraqi people, nor certainly my own country. But the Iraqi regime missed the chance given by Security Council resolution 1441 (2002) and continued to ignore the will of the international community at the expense of its own people. We have joined the coalition, under the authority of a number of Security Council resolutions, most notably resolutions 678 (1990) and 1441 (2002), because it was the only way left to disarm the Iraqi regime and fully rid Iraq of weapons of mass destruction. Unhappy that it had to come to military action, we believe that the present course of action will result in a safer and better world for all humankind, especially for the people of the region itself.

We are greatly concerned with the humanitarian situation in Iraq, for which the Iraqi regime is fully responsible. It is imperative that supplies be able to enter in a safe manner and be distributed unimpeded. While supplies will be brought in initially by coalition forces, we hope that the various United Nations programmes will be able to resume their respective roles as soon as possible. Furthermore, the United Nations has to play a key role in rebuilding Iraq, not just from the current war but also from the suffering of the last 20-some years. We urge all Governments that can to contribute to this effort.

My Government is appalled by news of prisoners of war being mistreated, and it calls on the Iraqi regime to adhere to the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War and to honour all obligations therein, especially that of giving the International Committee of the Red Cross immediate and unconditional access and refraining from any inhumane or degrading treatment.

Addressing the situation in Iraq, my Government, in a recent declaration, stated:

> "The United Nations Organization must be and must remain the keystone of international cooperation as we proceed into the century of globalization. It would amount to a tragedy for

mankind if that Organization were to fail now to be worthy of the challenge so clearly before it."

Clearly, the Security Council must not fail to address the issue of rebuilding Iraq.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Mrs. Mulamula (United Republic of Tanzania): We thank you for convening this important meeting, which is the first following the outbreak of war in Iraq. The general membership of the United Nations, through this meeting, will have the opportunity to communicate their views on this very critical issue involving international peace and security.

The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania is deeply saddened by the decision taken by the United States and the coalition to resort to armed action in Iraq. With the declaration of the Movement of the Non-Aligned Countries adopted in February in Kuala Lumpur, the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania had hoped that reason would prevail and time would be allowed to have the situation resolved in an amicable manner. Tanzania is therefore deeply troubled by the raging war and its inevitable consequences, not only in the region, but also throughout the world.

It is very ironic to note that the decision to disarm Iraq forcefully was taken while the international community, through this body, was in the midst of implementing resolution 1441 (2002). According to the periodic reports of the international inspectors presented in this forum, the work was progressing well and had started bearing positive results. Furthermore, at the time of the decision to embark on armed attack, there was no evidence found by the inspectors that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction.

After observing the signs indicating that the United States and its coalition were slowly inching towards adopting unilateral measures, the international community expressed its concerns and called on the United States to change direction. I can cite here members of the African Union, the Movement of the Non-Aligned Countries, the League of Arab States and many other countries, including some members of the European Union, who strongly expressed the view that the United Nations should be given more time to complete the task before any decision to use force against Iraq could be taken. The overwhelming view, it may be recalled, was that any decision to resort to the use of force should be taken by the United Nations, and this only after ensuring that all efforts towards a peaceful settlement had been exhausted and had failed. We are familiar with the fact that that course of action was rejected out of hand.

In that respect, the decision to resort to the use of force against Iraq is null and void, as it goes against United Nations Charter provisions that require the decision to use force against a country threatening international peace and security to be adopted by the Security Council. Article 39 of the Charter clearly states that only the Security Council can determine the existence of a breach of peace or of an act of aggression, and only the Security Council can recommend, or decide on, what measures are to be taken.

The decision to go to war without the authority of the Council not only weakens the United Nations — the only institution serving all countries all over the world — but also has the potential to endanger international peace and security. One cannot predict with any certainty what will happen to the very volatile region of the Middle East. The question of Palestine has long required urgent action, but none has been forthcoming. Every day, more deaths fill the media screens. How many more must die before the Security Council decides to act? Tanzania hopes and expects that all countries will continue to respect and honour the procedures that have been laid down for the taking and implementing of decisions of high import through the United Nations.

The United Nations was established out of the need to save future generations from the scourge of war, which had brought immense misery to mankind and whose effects are still felt to this day, over 50 years later. Tanzania does not believe that that mission has changed. Hence, besides infringing the provisions of international law, the war will definitely lead to the loss of many innocent lives in Iraq. The economy of Iraq and those of many other countries, particularly poor and developing ones, will be adversely affected by the consequences of war. In addition, the war will further exacerbate the political and social problems currently facing the world — particularly that of international terrorism, which we all are working hard to combat.

In conclusion, Tanzania urges the Security Council to see to it that everything that can be done is done, as soon as possible, immediately to bring the war to an end and to address the ever-deteriorating humanitarian situation in Iraq.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the Permanent Observer of Palestine.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Security Council is meeting today to discuss the destructive war that is being waged against Iraq and its repercussions, including, naturally, the tremendous humanitarian suffering of the fraternal Iraqi people. We hope that the Security Council will be able to put an end to what it taking place and that it will shoulder its responsibilities in the maintenance of international peace and security, as mandated by the Charter of the United Nations.

It is an established fact that this war is being waged outside the context of the United Nations and without any authorization by the Council. It is also a fact that the majority of the members of the Security Council, not to mention the majority of the Members of the United Nations, were against this war and had called for time to be given to the inspections regime to fulfil its mandate under resolution 1441 (2002). Furthermore, this war will have far-reaching and profound repercussions for the Middle East region and for the system of international relations, including on the United Nations itself.

The international community must therefore give in-depth consideration to the issue, so that we can promptly arrive at a solution that will mitigate such destructive tendencies. The Palestinian people — given the long suffering that they have experienced under occupation and aggression — cannot but oppose the use of force in settling international disputes.

Our people stand side by side with our other Arab brethren, and we stand, therefore, in full solidarity with the Iraqi people, who are suffering as a result of the military operations being carried out by forces led by the United States. Our people are becoming increasingly angry and frustrated and feel hostility between themselves and those whom they deem responsible for whatever is currently happening, in addition to what has happened throughout the years.

We support the resolutions adopted by the summits of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Arab Summit, as well as the decision of the Council of Ministers of the League of Arab States. We call for an immediate cessation of the military operations against Iraq, and we call for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Iraqi land.

We stress the importance of Iraqi unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity. We condemn any attempt to erode Iraq independence. We must fully respect the Geneva conventions, not only those relative to the protection of prisoners of war but also those relative to the protection of civilians. We welcome the renewed interest in and importance attached by some to those conventions, and we call for their full respect at all times, in compliance with the legal commitments undertaken by the High Contracting Parties.

Change, even for the better, cannot come from outside, nor can it be imposed on peoples, particularly through the use of military force. Nor can political systems be imposed from outside. This was one of the basic principles of the international system until now. Therefore we cannot but express our concern over what is described as the conceptual basis of what is happening, and not only at the developments on the ground.

We in Palestine are concerned over what is happening, because there is a real fear that Mr. Sharon and his Government — one of the primary beneficiaries of the war — will escalate their bloody military campaign against our people and take additional illegitimate measures on the ground.

We call on the Security Council to remain attentive to the situation in the Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, in the coming weeks. Nothing angers Arab and Palestinian citizens more than the double standards we have come to experience, or sometimes the absence of any criteria when the situation has to do with us Arabs and Palestinians, and therefore there is a need to put an end to that. We have good reason not to believe that this will happen, and hope that we are wrong.

The President (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to the representative of Costa Rica.

Mr. Stagno Ugarte (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Given the current military conflict in Iraq, it is the chief concern of the Costa Rican Government to plead for respect for human rights, above and beyond

any other consideration. We wish to speak out for children, fathers and mothers, older persons, the displaced and the wounded — that is to say, the real victims of war, whatever their allegiance. Costa Rica calls on the warring parties to respect Iraq's territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence, in conformity with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

Moreover, at the end of the armed conflict, the parties maintaining troops on Iraqi territory must continue to comply with their obligations, in conformity with international humanitarian law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. For that reason, Costa Rica urges that the civilian population's security and inalienable human rights — particularly their right to life and personal integrity — be guaranteed. We demand that all warring parties comply scrupulously with their obligations under international humanitarian law, particularly their obligations arising out of the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Additional Protocols of 1977.

Likewise, my delegation demands full respect for international humanitarian law and international refugee law, with a view to providing the broadest possible protection for all refugees, internally displaced persons and other victims of the hostilities. We appeal to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to devote immediate attention to the situation of such persons. The fundamental rights of prisoners of war, irregular combatants and all other detained persons must be fully respected, in conformity with the norms of international law governing armed conflict.

In my country, we are convinced that legitimate, lasting and sustainable peace in Iraq can be built only through multilateral action within the framework of the United Nations. For that reason, we consider it essential to establish a temporary administrative structure in Iraq at the end of the armed conflict, under United Nations monitoring and administration, with a view to ensuring a climate of stability and to creating the conditions necessary for lasting peace and respect for human rights.

Throughout the rebuilding phase, we must bear in mind that Iraq must comply fully with all its disarmament obligations, must be free of weapons of mass destruction and must not become a refuge for international terrorist organizations. In that context, we regard the role of the United Nations as essential in the definition, elaboration and implementation of the principal objectives of Iraq's reconstruction. Moreover, with a view to providing humanitarian relief to the most vulnerable populations and to financing reconstruction, the Organization must administer Iraq's natural resources — particularly oil — in conformity with the relevant Security Council resolutions and bearing in mind, above all, the Iraqi people's best interests.

My delegation invites the Secretary-General and the United Nations Development Programme to take a detailed inventory of the war's economic effects and to assess needs for international cooperation for reconstruction. In parallel, we call on the international community — in particular the warring States — to cooperate with Iraq in repairing the pernicious environmental effects of the conflict.

Finally, Costa Rica reaffirms its full support for United Nations specialized agencies charged with monitoring respect for and implementation of humanitarian law and human rights in situations of armed conflict and after conflicts. We express our firm resolve to contribute to the extent of our ability — together with international humanitarian assistance bodies, including the International Committee of the Red Cross and United Nations specialized agencies — to programmes aimed at the rebuilding of Iraq.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Timor-Leste.

Mr. Guterres (Timor-Leste): We would like to thank you, Mr. President, and the members of the Security Council for this opportunity to address an issue of major concern to the international community.

The issue before us has been discussed here for many years, beginning with Iraq's invasion and occupation of Kuwait, a small neighbouring country. The Government of Iraq's record with regard to the use of chemical weapons against its Kurdish population and during aggression against Iran is a matter of the most serious concern to all of us. The Government of Iraq's lack of serious commitment thus far to fully complying with Security Council resolutions has contributed to the grave situation we are facing today.

As a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, we share the views expressed in the final documents of the Kuala Lumpur Summit, in particular regarding the need for the Iraqi Government to fully comply with Security Council resolution 1441 (2002).

The Government of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste issued a statement on 19 March that expressed, inter alia, its consternation at the Security Council's inability to reach a consensus on the implementation and enforcement of its resolutions concerning Iraq. As a small, peace-loving country, we stand for a multilateral approach in the search for solutions to the problems affecting the world.

It is our hope that, in the current military intervention, all sides will respect international humanitarian law, in particular the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol I, concerning the treatment of civilians and prisoners of war. We appeal to the Secretary-General and to the members of the Security Council to continue to focus their attention on this grave situation and to build a consensus, not only to provide adequate and urgent humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people, but also to bring about lasting peace with respect for territorial integrity and to work on scenarios for the post-conflict situation.

Timor-Leste knows from its own experience that when the United Nations system — in particular the Security Council — is willing to act, it has proved to be very effective in restoring peace and international legality, in maintaining stability and in creating sound foundations for democratic countries in which human rights and freedom will flourish. At this difficult moment, we should like to express our solidarity with the people of Iraq in their struggle for lasting peace, freedom, democracy, human rights and national reconciliation.

We share the conviction — expressed here by many countries — that we must also address the demands for freedom and independence on the part of the people of Palestine in order to achieve lasting peace, justice and stability in the region. Therefore, we welcome the renewed commitment of the United States of America and the European Union in that regard.

Yesterday, the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, made an urgent appeal for unity and common purpose in the Security Council. In echoing his appeal, we urge the Council to continue to search for solutions to these and other conflicts with determination and unity, fulfilling their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Honduras.

Mr. Acosta Bonilla (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council has all the world's citizens in suspense. Its wisdom and its ability to act will largely determine its future, which is seriously threatened by war, by economic crisis and, in wide areas, by hunger. Another factor is the uncertainty of humanity's future. The relative tranquillity of the post-war and post-cold-war periods is now being lost, as events have called into question the institution created specifically to ensure global peace and harmony.

During the past half-century that we have experienced, the main role has been played by the United Nations, which, despite its limitations and weaknesses, has finally been able to tackle the long list of conflicts of conflicts and crises that mankind has faced over the past 50 years. What concerns everyone now is that the United Nations is paralysed and that this uncontrolled situation may cause its ultimate destruction. The hope for a democratic world that respects human rights seems to be dissipating in an atmosphere charged with destructive and violent forces.

Hondurans want to enjoy universal peace and a world governed by law and providing opportunities for advancement to all the men and women on the earth, so they may enjoy civilized life and prosperity. In order to make this a reality, it is absolutely necessary for the United Nations to continue to operate with legal force and efficiency in order to resolve problems of any kind that may injure humankind.

Hondurans have hope the Security Council will bring to bear its authority to ensure that current differences are promptly overcome and that confidence in the Council's unity remains, so that it may correctly address the world affairs on its agenda. What is in jeopardy is infinitely more valuable — morally, culturally and economically — than the matters that have led to division which should be overcome promptly and properly.

The Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, in his heroic struggles at the beginning of this current tragedy correctly stated that it is an urgent necessity to ensure that humanitarian assistance is not interrupted for those

in need, and that, above and beyond any other consideration, the institution's procedures must be reorganized so as to continue the delivery of medicines, foodstuffs and shelter to the children, women and elderly who require them. We cannot allow the tragedy to take on inhuman dimensions in the twenty-first century. The Security Council must immediately support the Secretary-General and establish the necessary provisions to meet the needs of the millions in need.

The Security Council must, together, or each member individually, make the maximum effort to ensure a promising and satisfactory future for the millions of human beings who aspire to such a future. It also has the unavoidable obligation to salvage the institution of the United Nations, which is the safeguard ensuring that individuals and States, large and small, can continue to live harmoniously and in peace. May there be peace for the benefit of all peoples.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker is the representative of the Dominican Republic.

Mr. Padilla Tonos (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): In the present circumstances, the Dominican Republic is committed to participate in all efforts of the United Nations and the international community to provide for the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people. It supports the idea that the Security Council give the Secretary-General the requisite authority and means to carry out that urgent task.

The Dominican Republic also hopes that the military action under way in Iraq will be of short duration, that loss of human life and material damage on all sides will be kept to a minimum, that the Geneva Conventions will be respected in accordance with international humanitarian law, that the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Iraq will be preserved, that as early as possible conditions will be created to allow the Iraqi people to live in a freedom and democracy, and that Iraq will be able, as soon as possible, to be fully reintegrated into the international community within the legal and political order which is perfectly articulated in the United Nations Charter. This is the Charter of an Organization that today must be preserved more than ever, under all circumstances, while within this Organization we must strengthen the unity of the Security Council as the primary organ responsible for international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker is the representative of Uganda.

Mr. Beyendeza (Uganda): In the last few months, Uganda and other members of the African Union, and the Non-Aligned Movement sought to achieve a peaceful disarmament and resolution of the crisis in Iraq in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolution 1441 (2002). It is unfortunate that diplomacy failed, as the United Nations Security Council was unable to reach a consensus on implementation of resolution 1441 (2002) to eliminate the weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. As a result, war broke out on 20 March 2003.

The Ugandan Government decided on 21 March 2003 to support the United States-led coalition to disarm Iraq by force. The reasons for this decision have already been forwarded to the Security Council with a request to circulate them to all members. Uganda wishes also to reaffirm its strong support for the people of Palestine to have a State of their own side by side with Israel.

Uganda's main concerns are terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. Uganda has been a victim of State-sponsored terrorism of the worst type and the Government of Saddam Hussain has provided active support to some of the terrorist groups that have operated against Uganda. Since 1986, such terrorist groups, including the Holy Spirit Movement, the Uganda People's Army, the Lord's Resistance Army, the Allied Democratic Forces and the West Nile Bank Front, have killed and inflicted untold misery on the population of Uganda, including burning to death students at Kichwamba Technical School. You have also heard of the deaths inflicted in the impenetrable forests of Bwindi in western Uganda and of human beings cooked in pots as was the case in Adilang in northern Uganda.

In Kampala alone, there have been over 48 bomb blasts resulting in 86 deaths and 286 severe injuries. The list goes on.

The link between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction is a threat to international peace and security that has been recognized by the Security Council. Considering the fact that Saddam Hussain has previously used these weapons of mass destruction on

his own people. Uganda believes that the danger of these weapons falling into the hands of terrorist groups is real.

We hope that the war will be short and civilian casualties will be minimized. Uganda would like to emphasize the need to ensure that the unity and independence of Iraq, including its sovereignty and territorial integrity, is maintained.

In addition, the international community may wish to focus on the immediate post-conflict mechanism after lifting the trade sanctions against Iraq to facilitate control by the Iraqi people of their own resources at the expiration of the oil for food programme.

Uganda welcomes and supports the Secretary-General's statements to the Council on 19 and 26 March 2003 on the continued United Nations role to avert the plight of war on the Iraqi people by effectively extending humanitarian assistance, including rebuilding basic infrastructure. The international community should support the Secretary-General's efforts to mobilize the necessary resources, including revenue currently under the oil for food programme, to reverse the humanitarian crisis that the Iraqi people are faced with.

Uganda feels that energies of the international community should now be concentrated on the post-war period. Given the divisive run-up to the current war in Iraq, there is need to restore the central role that United Nations should continue to play in the maintenance of international peace and security. It is also important that the attention of the international community not be distracted from the various key areas that are critical in building a safer world in the twenty-first century.

In our view, these include the following areas: The first is the resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict in the Middle East to ensure that both Israeli and Palestinian States exist side by side in secure and internationally recognized borders. Secondly, we need to build a global, multilateral and sustained campaign against terrorism. We must recognize the potential danger from the link between terrorists and weapons of mass destruction. The use of indiscriminate violence in pursuit of political or any other goals should be outlawed. Thirdly, we need to reverse the marginalization of Africa and other developing countries, ensuring equitable distribution of the benefits of globalization.

Finally, Uganda calls upon the international community to urgently agree on measures to mitigate the negative impact of the conflict in the Gulf region, especially on the fragile economies in Africa and developing countries.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Sri Lanka.

Mr. Mahendran (Sri Lanka): Sri Lanka has consistently urged Iraq to comply fully with the United Nations Security Council resolutions obliging it to eliminate weapons of mass destruction. Until now, the lack of full compliance has led to the present situation. Therefore, the elimination of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq has not been completed through peaceful means. Unfortunately, the lack of concurrence in the Security Council on how to proceed with its own resolution 1441 (2002), adopted unanimously, has led to the collapse of the United Nations process.

Sri Lanka is committed to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq. We are greatly disturbed by the outbreak of this conflict in the Middle East. Sri Lanka is gravely concerned about the massive political, economic, social and, above all, humanitarian consequences that would ensue in the military conflict, affecting Iraq, the Middle East region and indeed international peace and security.

We express our confidence in the coalition partners to move early to minimize the adverse consequences on the civilian population in Iraq and, in association with other members of the international community, to coordinate rehabilitation efforts in the country.

The United Nations must play an active role during and after the crisis situation. In this context, there is an urgent need to address the major humanitarian requirements of the Iraqi people and to ensure the safety of the civilian people.

Beyond the current issue, the United Nations must continue to play an undiminished role in other situations of tension such as, in particular, the question of Palestine. There should be substantial progress towards an enduring and just peace, in which the State of Israel and Palestine can live in freedom and mutual trust within secure boundaries in accordance with

Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002).

The all-pervasive evil of terrorism must not at this stage be permitted to exploit and thrive on the global uncertainty and tension, which have now been heightened. The international consensus and collective will to eradicate all forms and manifestations of terrorism, wherever and in whatever circumstances it occurs, must not be deflected or blunted. Terrorism should not be identified and stereotyped with any particular religion, nationality or civilization.

It is tragic in the current dangerous situation that the United Nations system, in particular the Security Council, has been rendered ineffective, and apparently even abandoned, due to disagreement among its members. Sri Lanka nevertheless continues to firmly believe that issues affecting international peace and security should be as far as possible identified, considered and resolved through the United Nations, the primary global institution through which the will of the international community can be legitimately expressed.

Therefore, it is essential that the role of the United Nations and its credibility and authority be restored and respected. The Government will continue to monitor closely the complex implications of the situation in Iraq. Sri Lanka will also seek to work closely with like-minded countries in the national and collective imperative to keep United Nations alive.

Sri Lanka urges a quick end to this crisis based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq and the safety, security and welfare of its people.

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform members of the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Kenya and Slovenia, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objections, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Jalang'o (Kenya) and Mr. Kirn (Slovenia) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ethiopia.

Mr. Zenna (Ethiopia): At the outset, let me commend you, Mr. President, for arranging this meeting. Ethiopia, as a country that co-sponsored the first resolution as a member of the Security Council, deeply regrets that 12 years had to pass without compliance, and the Government of Iraq still chose not to take the final opportunity afforded to it by resolution 1441 (2002). The onus to avoid war has always been on the Iraqi regime. And the regime failed to avert war.

Ethiopia firmly believes in the collective security envisaged by the Charter. As stated by the Secretary-General before this Council yesterday, "The Council, which have now had Iraq on its agenda for 12 long years, must rediscover its unity of purpose". The Council's unity of purpose needs to be restored and further strengthened.

Now is the time to look forward, not backwards. There is a big humanitarian challenge ahead of us. Now is the time for the Council to look into the humanitarian situation of the Iraqi people, during and after the current crisis.

We believe the Council should continue to play a central role in that regard. As such, it is imperative for the Council to draw up a mechanism that will allow for the provision of immediate humanitarian assistance to the needy. It should also consider long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes. As already requested, the Council should act with urgency to resume the oil for food programme by giving the required legislative mandate to the Secretary-General and by adopting the draft humanitarian resolution before it.

We also support the call of the Secretary-General for both sides to adhere to their obligations under international humanitarian laws governing the conduct of war, including the treatment of prisoners of war.

In conclusion, Ethiopia appeals to the members of the Security Council, particularly to the five permanent members, to demonstrate leadership in carrying out the solemn duty entrusted to them by the United Nations Charter.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Kyrgyzstan, on whom I now call.

Mr. Baialinov (Kyrgyzstan) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to read out the text of the statement issued by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kyrgyzstan with regard to the item on today's agenda:

> "Due to the initiation of hostilities in Iraq, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic would like to express its extreme concern and regret over the fact that the Iraqi problem has begun to be dealt with by the use of force, bypassing decisions of the Security Council of the United Nations, the primary international body for collective security.
>
> "I would like to point out that Kyrgyzstan has always called for a political settlement of the Iraqi problem, on the basis of the existing relevant resolutions of the Security Council. In the current circumstances, Kyrgyzstan deeply regrets that the opportunity for a political settlement has been missed. We nevertheless hope that it will be possible to avoid civilian casualties and the use of weapons of mass destruction.
>
> "We would like to express the hope that the consolidated efforts of the entire international community will help avert a humanitarian crisis in the area. We also hope that peace and stability on Iraqi soil will soon be achieved, and that the post-conflict reconstruction of Iraq will begin as soon as possible.
>
> "With regard to questions stemming from the international anti-terrorism coalition's use of the Ganci air base at Manas airport in connection with hostilities in Iraq, we would again like to point out that, while being fully aware of our responsibilities, under agreements signed by Kyrgyzstan with countries comprising that coalition, the air base may be used only for the purpose of ensuring the successful conduct of the anti-terrorism operation in Afghanistan."

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Jordan, on whom I now call.

Mr. Al-Hussein (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Council of Ministers of the League of Arab States recently held a meeting to consider the very dangerous situation in Iraq. That meeting adopted a decision reflecting the feelings of the Arab people. In that regard, Jordan affirmed, as part of international efforts, the need to find a peaceful solution to the Iraqi crisis in order to avoid war and its negative and devastating effects, both in Iraq and in the region. However, most regrettably, it was not possible to find such a solution.

Jordan is continuing to expand its contacts with fraternal Arab countries and members of the international community in order to end hostilities as soon as possible and to avert more physical and human casualties. We also seek to avoid violation of Iraq's territorial integrity, natural resources and national unity.

Jordan is saddened and regrets the humanitarian situation in Iraq, and would like to express our deep concern with regard to this subject. We reaffirm our commitment to provide whatever assistance and humanitarian aid may be necessary — in particular as concerns Iraqi refugees.

His Majesty the King of Jordan has made the following statement to the people of Jordan:

> "We are deeply committed to meeting our humanitarian and fraternal responsibilities vis-à-vis the Iraqi people to the extent of our capabilities. We will therefore do our utmost to end this war as soon as possible and to alleviate the suffering of our brothers and help them cope with the effects of the war."

Jordan would like to reiterate its appeal to the international community and the parties concerned to live up to their international responsibilities to ease the plight of the Iraqi people so that they may overcome their current situation. We call for an end to the war and for the provision and delivery of the necessary humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi people. We also call upon the Security Council to live up to its responsibilities, including by adopting a new resolution on the oil for food programme as soon as possible.

The dangerous crises in the Middle East also make it essential that we succeed in our efforts to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Kenya, on whom I now call.

Mr. Jalang'o (Kenya): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for facilitating this debate so that the general membership of the United Nations can express its views on the extremely important and serious situation in Iraq.

At the outset, my delegation wishes to fully associate itself with the statement made yesterday by Ambassador Rastam Mohd Isa of Malaysia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Secondly, my delegation wishes to commend Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his very important statement during this debate and for the way he has continued to handle this crisis. At a time when the situation is escalating to engulf the well-being, welfare and lives of non-combatants — especially women and children — it is important that the Secretary-General's voice of reason continues to be a beacon of hope.

My delegation has always been convinced that the provisions of Security Council resolution 1441 (2002) were adequate to resolve the issue of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction through peaceful means. Indeed, the arms inspectors reinforced that conviction in all their reports. However, we are now faced with a situation in which the role of the Untied Nations has been rendered less effective. It is a situation in which the roles of the arms inspectors and the humanitarian workers have been suspended due to the dangers posed by the ongoing war. Daily, we are witnessing an ever-rising number of civilian casualties, some far removed from the actual theatre of war. We also have a large number of people without drinking water and food. It is a situation that invites epidemics of catastrophic proportions, bearing in mind that, even before the outbreak of war, children were still dying of curable diseases, hunger and malnutrition.

My delegation strongly urges that the humanitarian situation in Iraq be addressed with the urgency it deserves, as has been underlined in the statements of the Secretary-General and of all other speakers. My delegation also calls for respect for the independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Iraq. It is our sincere belief that the people of Iraq should have the freedom to enjoy the abundance of their natural resources under the guidance of the Government of their choice.

Finally, my delegation strongly urges the United Nations to remain focused on the current situation in Iraq, which is a threat to international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of Slovenia.

Mr. Kirn (Slovenia): In addition to associating ourselves with the statement delivered yesterday by the representative of Greece on behalf of the European Union member and acceding countries, we wish, in our national capacity, to add a few points.

We welcome the opportunity of having an open debate of the Security Council on such an important issue. In so doing, we remain committed to the relevant conclusions of the European Council, including those of 17 February and of 20 March 2003.

Slovenia has continuously held the view that the Security Council is the body holding primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It is urgent to reaffirm and restore the Council's credibility and authority as the body addressing and resolving crises threatening international peace and stability.

Slovenia continues to support all efforts of the international community to curb the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It has been and continues to be our position that Iraq was obliged to fully and unconditionally comply with international norms, and specifically with the requirements of the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 1441 (2002). We would have strongly preferred that the disarmament of Iraq and its verification had been achieved without resorting to use of force. We regret that unanimity could not be reached within the Council on ways to resolve the Iraqi crisis by ensuring compliance with its previous resolutions in accordance with the United Nations Charter, other norms of international law and the relevant Council resolutions.

We wish to use this opportunity to express our appreciation for the work of the inspections process, and specifically to both chief inspectors Dr. Blix and Dr. ElBaradei and their teams for their work and reports submitted to the Council.

At the current time, it is vital to ensure full respect for the norms of international humanitarian law and universal human rights. We salute the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) for its courageous work. During this time of war, ICRC's unimpeded access in crisis areas is of vital importance. As a

concrete gesture in support of its work, Slovenia will provide a donation to ICRC's activities in Iraq.

Every effort must be engaged to minimize the effect of the war on Iraqi civilians. Our combined special attention should be particularly addressed to the vulnerable population, and especially to the Iraqi children. Slovenia, as a member of the Human Security Network, is deliberating a possible contribution to that effect.

Slovenia hopes that the oil for food programme can be resumed as soon as possible. We support the Secretary-General's proposals in this respect. In current deliberations over the extension of the programme, we should always bear in mind that the majority of the Iraqi population is critically dependent upon the programme.

The resolution of the Iraqi crisis and dealing with its consequences should be restored to the United Nations framework. We further hope that political and security conditions can be created for the return of United Nations personnel to affected areas to provide urgent humanitarian assistance.

Slovenia is willing to contribute its share in addressing the major humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people and affected neighbouring States arising from the conflict, and will respond favourably to the appeal to be issued by the United Nations to meet humanitarian needs in and around Iraq. Slovenia will also try to contribute to the best of its abilities to the post-war rehabilitation and reconstruction of Iraqi society.

In conclusion, Slovenia appeals for the restoration of the unity of the international community as soon as possible in resolving the Iraqi crisis in the framework of the United Nations and the Security Council. We join in the call of the Secretary-General to the Security Council to reunite around a new resolve to uphold the principles of the Charter.

Mr. Aguilar Zinser (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico commends you, Sir, on your decision to respond immediately to the request submitted by a large number of States Members of the United Nations to convene today's debate. Bearing in mind this Council's commitment to transparency, we have heard more than one third of States Members averring their positions in this Chamber on the war in Iraq, its immediate effects and its probable consequences; on the humanitarian needs of the affected populations; on the responsibilities and duties which international humanitarian law imposes on the parties; and on the reconstruction of Iraq.

Two common concerns have been expressed in all the positions stated in this debate. The first bears on the circumstances in which this war will come to an end and on what we can do to halt it. The second bears on the question of the future of our Organization, the United Nations.

In the eyes of the world, this Council is fractured. Indeed, the formula for achieving the disarmament of Iraq divided us. The differences that emerged here have led to an intensive debate about the authority of the Security Council, the validity of multilateralism, the United Nations capacity to enforce its resolutions and, in general, the effectiveness of the collective security mechanisms established in the United Nations Charter.

In these circumstances and at this time of reflection, Mexico reaffirms its commitment to the United Nations and its conviction that it is only within the framework of the San Francisco Charter and by means of multilateral decision-making mechanisms that humankind will be able to find genuine and effective formulas of collective security that will truly prevent conflict, proscribe the use of force in international relations, induce parties to choose peaceful means of resolving their disputes, stop war once it has begun, restore peace in fair conditions, and promote full and complete disarmament and the eradication of weapons of mass destruction.

The Security Council was established with the central mandate of ensuring the maintenance of international peace and security. Nothing today has changed that. In carrying out that mandate, we in the Security Council must strive through diplomatic actions to secure an end to this conflict. The disagreements that prevented the Council from continuing inspections and the peaceful disarmament of Iraq do not nullify the aspirations of the United Nations or invalidate multilateralism. They do not divert us from the values that gave life to the Organization. What is happening in Iraq should be a sign that the world cannot dispense with the United Nations.

Mexico regrets the war and deplores the suffering of the Iraqi people. Destruction and the loss of human life must be avoided. Together with other members of the Council, my country sought formulas of

understanding that would have enabled the Council to maintain by collective agreement the inspections regime and political and diplomatic pressure, by means of which we believed we could achieve the peaceful disarmament of Iraq.

Faced with the impossibility of reaching such an agreement, Mexico maintains its conviction that this war should not have broken out. We uphold our commitment to continue working within the Security Council to find positions and actions that enable us to restore peace in Iraq.

In that regard, the immediate challenge to the Council is not to fall into paralysis or irrelevance. We must overcome our differences and promptly reach a consensus that will enable us, first and foremost, to meet without delay the humanitarian responsibilities already assumed by the Council, on which depend the welfare and, today, the survival of a large part of the Iraqi population.

That is the task and mandate of the oil for food programme established pursuant to resolution 986 (1995): to use resources from the sale of the petroleum of that country to alleviate the consequences of the sanctions imposed on Iraq. The resources of that programme belong to the Iraqis. Nothing could justify a failure by the Security Council today to take the decisions necessary to enable the people of Iraq to benefit immediately from those resources. To the extent that the Council is able to reactivate that programme and to respond to this grave humanitarian emergency by granting the Secretary-General the powers necessary for its functioning, we will be able in the near future to influence the establishment of conditions that put an end to the armed conflict.

In that regard, Mexico welcomes the presentation of the humanitarian "flash appeal", as the Secretary-General has called it, which was developed by the Secretary-General and which appeals to all Member States to contribute generously to meet the urgent humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people. Mexico will make its contribution to that effort.

The United Nations must now also strive to ensure that all the parties involved in this conflict respect international humanitarian law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention, in which are enshrined the responsibilities and obligations of the belligerent parties and the fundamental rights of the civilian population, regardless of the cause of or grounds for war. It is in our hands to ensure that the humanitarian agencies of the United Nations system, the International Committee of the Red Cross and non-governmental organizations devoted to humanitarian relief can fulfil their mission and act with the necessary safeguards in any location where direct or indirect victims of this war are found.

It is also incumbent upon the Security Council and the United Nations as a whole to do their utmost to ensure that all States respect the territorial integrity of Iraq, as well as the fundamental and inalienable rights of the Iraqi people over their resources, in particular their oil. Whatever dimensions the armed conflict assumes, here in the United Nations we must make a great effort to ensure that peace in Iraq is not re-established at the expense of the country's territorial integrity. If this conflict is taking place because of decisions taken outside the Security Council, the Council is nonetheless the only body with the legitimacy, authority and powers necessary for undertaking a peace process.

This conflict has made evident the need to reflect and to define the actions to take in three principle areas: first, strengthening multilateralism, in particular the role of the United Nations and the Security Council; second, the search for consensus on the means for effectively achieving the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction; and third, updating the norms of international law relating to armed conflict. All Member States should participate in this process of reflection, contributing ideas and proposals for the reinvigoration and transformation of the United Nations.

Mr. Lucas (Angola): First, let me assure you, Mr. President, that I will be brief, in compliance with your reiterated request. Let me stress the very valuable contributions of a good number of speakers before me, which greatly enriched our debate on this very important issue.

Secondly, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for scheduling this meeting at the request of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Arab States. Your decision gives the whole membership of the United Nations the opportunity to express its views and to present proposals that might contribute to resolving the grave situation that the world is facing due to large-scale hostilities whose consequences will surely be far-reaching for the peoples of Iraq, the

Middle East region and the international community in its entirety.

The current situation in Iraq, which affects the entire Middle East, is a source of great concern to us all, since this is a vital region of the world where in the last 100 years very high strategic stakes have been played with far-reaching impact. The region's immense wealth has in large measure shaped the model of development that the world has today. Thus, it is understandable that the entire world community represented here at the United Nations feels deeply concerned about what is happening in that vital region. The contributions that we have been witnessing in this debate by all countries — big and small — are testimony of the seriousness of the current situation and of the concern about the real danger of the disruption of the present world order.

The fact that we in Angola have lived through many years of war has been a source of inspiration to us to genuinely join efforts in the Security Council to strive for a peaceful solution to the conflict in Iraq. Thus, we deplore that the efforts and the good will of so many countries were uprooted by war, which puts us all in the situation of trying to control the damage inflicted on the Iraqi people and on international relations. In that context, we urge the parties to the conflict to strictly abide by international humanitarian law and avoid, by all means, afflicting further suffering on the civilian population.

Under the present circumstances, it is our duty to do everything in our power to reduce the heavy plight being endured by the Iraqi people and to deploy all efforts to face the humanitarian situation in Iraq. The Secretary-General presented to us a set of proposals that we have all approved, and we should, therefore, quickly move forward in order to make them operational, assisting the Iraqi people in this very difficult hour.

Besides assisting the Iraqi people in the humanitarian field, it is our view that the international community, and Arab countries in particular that share with Iraq a common cultural, geographic and political heritage, should assist the country in recuperating from the wounds of war and help Iraq, with the advent of peace, to occupy the place that it rightfully deserves in the community of free nations.

In our view, we should avoid mutual recriminations and avoid putting in doubt the effectiveness and the role of the Security Council. To the contrary, we believe that we will make a great contribution to world peace and security if we deploy collective efforts to enable the Security Council to continue to play its role, however imperfect — as all human beings are — as the international community's guarantor of international peace and security, and, as the hope of people, nations and institutions at times of crises and disbelief.

It is possible to overcome critical times, and times of crisis are particularly favourable for reflection and assessment. We believe that events in Iraq and the aftermath of the Security Council's failure to achieve a peaceful solution to the crisis might constitute a very favourable moment to engage in a great debate on the future of the world and on the role of the United Nations and the Security Council in shaping a world that is more peaceful, just, equitable and secure.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): War has come again to the Gulf. War is not only the last option. It is also an ugly option. Pakistan deplores the resort to the use of force. This was a war that Pakistan tried strenuously and sincerely to prevent. This is a war that was 12 years in the making. It could have been prevented if the increasingly robust United Nations inspections regime, installed after the adoption of resolution 1441 (2002), had been allowed more time to secure the effective and verified elimination of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

A large segment of the United Nations membership has participated in this debate initiated at the request of the League of Arab States and the Movement of the Non-Aligned Countries. We hope that the concerns voiced here and the positions articulated will help the Council find a united way forward in dealing with the challenges we confront. We thank the Secretary-General for his very thoughtful statement yesterday. His eloquent call for urgent humanitarian relief for the Iraqi people and for unity within the Council deserves our utmost attention.

The outbreak of this war was not due to the failure of the Security Council. The Council did not endorse the war. The Security Council remains relevant to restoring peace, containing the conflict, providing relief and restoring stability and the rule of law.

As Pakistan has said, the time and space for diplomacy never ends. The mandate of this Council is not only to maintain, but also to restore, international

peace and security. In this situation, the Security Council cannot give up efforts to secure a cessation of hostilities. Even in the midst of conflict, we must continue our collective efforts to search for ways and means by which peace can be restored. Obviously, we will not be able to achieve this through condemnation or recrimination, however deplorable the use of force. We could do so through exploration of the possibilities for peace between the warring parties. Surely no one wishes to witness the needless loss of life of their sons and daughters, and especially not innocent civilians. Therefore, the search for the magic ring must not be given up.

In this war, people must come first. To contain the human consequences of the conflict is our most urgent task. Pakistan was the first to call on the Council to address the welfare of the Iraqi people. This is a task that we can fulfil. We join in mourning for those, especially the innocent men, women and children, who have lost their lives in these early days of the conflict. The Council must ask for strict respect for international humanitarian law by the parties to the conflict. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has warned that humanitarian law prohibits direct attacks against civilians and requires that belligerents must take every precaution in military operations to spare the civilian population. Humanitarian law also states that "the right to choose weapons of warfare is not unlimited. Weapons having indiscriminate effect and/or causing unnecessary suffering are forbidden".

Besides protecting civilians, sparing infrastructure and preserving the sanctity of the holy places, the parties to the conflict must treat detainees humanely and provide maximum protection and assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons.

As stipulated by the Fourth Geneva Convention, those in effective control or occupation of any territory are responsible for meeting the humanitarian needs of the population and are required to maintain dialogue and cooperation with international organizations engaged in humanitarian relief.

Due to the application of sanctions for a dozen years, the Iraqi people are unfortunately dependent, in order to meet their essential needs, on the United Nations-operated oil for food programme. This relationship has now been disrupted. Warned of the impending war, the Secretary-General had no choice but to withdraw United Nations personnel. However, now, once the parameters of the conflict become clearer, the United Nations could begin to resume its role and responsibilities for humanitarian and food assistance to the Iraqi people. Fortunately, the United Nations has the machinery to discharge these responsibilities.

Pakistan agrees that appropriate adjustments need to be made to the oil for food programme to enable the Secretary-General to ensure that the shipments of the most urgently required items that have already been contracted for are the first to be delivered at places where they can be received and distributed.

We believe that, for the provision of emergency relief, the first consideration should be humanity rather than legality. The United Nations must deal with whoever is in effective control in the areas where aid is to be distributed. It must use all the existing Iraqi distribution networks for that purpose.

In this context, arrangements should be put in place to enable all humanitarian agencies and organizations which are prepared to assist, including humanitarian organizations in several Islamic countries, to provide relief assistance to the Iraqi people. In Pakistan, official and non-governmental organizations are on standby for such arrangements in order to bring help to their brothers and sisters in Iraq.

While the existence of the oil for food programme and the $2.5 billion in contracted shipments under way may be the best option to urgently meet the essential needs of the Iraqi people, it is vital to underline certain principles in this context.

First, the Security Council must reaffirm the permanent sovereignty of the Iraqi people over their natural resources. Control over those resources must revert to them as soon as possible. To that end, the sanctions imposed in the past must end quickly after the conflict.

Secondly, the Iraqi people should not be asked to bear the burden of the extra costs that will be incurred in making the adjustments in the existing oil for food programme by way of accelerating, delaying or diverting shipments. Those extra costs should be met through the normal insurance coverage. If paid for by the oil for food programme, they should be reimbursed by contributions from the international community as soon as possible.

Thirdly, apart from the humanitarian responsibilities of the parties to the conflict, the international community must also contribute to meeting the essential needs of the Iraqi people. The existence of the oil for food programme should not imply that the Iraqi people must pay for the emergency needs created by a conflict which is not of their making.

International humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi people will need to be coherently planned and effectively coordinated. This can best be done by the United Nations. The Secretary-General may wish to consider the appointment of an appropriate high official who can serve as the focal point and coordinator of international relief assistance to Iraq.

The third objective for the Security Council, the United Nations and the international community is to contain the conflict, to arrest the spread of instability in the region and to restore the rule of law in Iraq and in international relations. The principles involved are clearly prescribed in our Charter: respect for the political independence, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq and of its neighbouring States; the right of the Iraqi people to choose their own political destiny and form of governance, in exercise of their right to self-determination; non-intervention and non-interference in internal affairs; permanent sovereignty and control over their natural resources; respect for the religious and cultural traditions of the people of Iraq and for the sanctity of the holy places, which are among the most venerated in the Islamic world; and the right of the Iraqi nation to economic and social reconstruction.

Discussion, in our view, must commence within the Council and with others concerned, at the United Nations and elsewhere, to realize these principles and objectives.

Finally, to contain the Iraqi conflict, to end hostilities, to stabilize the region and to restore the rule of law, it will be essential to adopt a comprehensive and equitable approach to peace, security and progress in the region. This conflict is being conducted with the declared objective of securing the implementation of Security Council resolutions. As everyone acknowledges, the Middle East conflict must be resolved on the basis of resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the vision of two States, Palestine and Israel, living side by side in conditions of peace, justice and security. We look forward to concrete implementation of the positive intentions that have been announced for the Middle East.

Equally, the dispute between Pakistan and India over Jammu and Kashmir must be resolved through implementation of the Security Council resolutions prescribing the exercise of the right of self-determination by the people of Jammu and Kashmir. The refusal of India to implement the Security Council's resolutions, its refusal of dialogue, its resort to repression of the Kashmiri people, and its threatening of Pakistan with the use of force should also be unacceptable to the United Nations and to the Security Council.

The failure to display and implement equity will accentuate the resentment and the suspicions regarding the objectives of the current conflict. It will heighten the incidence of violence and terrorism. It will spread instability. It will erode the conduct of international relations on the basis of the principles of the United Nations Charter and of international law.

Whatever our views about the current conflict, we all acknowledge that we are living through a defining moment in world history.

The future of our countries and of our peoples will depend considerably on the manner in which we respond to this crisis. Every crisis presents challenges, but it also opens up opportunities. Our response to this crisis must therefore be principled, but it must also be wise, designed to construct a new world order for the twenty-first century and based on the principles of the Charter and on the unrelenting quest of the human race for global peace, progress and justice.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom fully subscribes to the balanced statement made earlier by Greece on behalf of the European Union and its affiliated European States.

My delegation has listened carefully to the points made by Member States of the United Nations in this debate. It is not surprising that, on a subject of this importance and intensity, there is such a wide diversity of views. Many speakers have referred to the 12-year period within which the peaceful disarmament of Iraq was attempted again and again by the Security Council. No one worked harder than the British Government to try to bring about that objective. No one has worked harder in recent weeks than the British Government to try to unite the Security Council around a position that

would have maintained the vigorous line adopted unanimously in resolution 1441 (2002).

I am fully aware that Member States, perhaps without exception, find the current situation deeply disappointing and distasteful. But they cannot set aside the clear, prolonged and universally available evidence that Iraq was repeatedly defying the United Nations in refusing complete disarmament of its weapons of mass destruction under the terms of successive resolutions. The express and explicit demands of the Security Council were never carried out by Iraq, and the United Nations has not succeeded in drawing the right conclusions about the consequences of that.

Resolution 1441 (2002) was adopted unanimously but not implemented with any rigour by a united Council. International peace and security cannot be maintained with responsibility by avoiding hard decisions. Iraq was clearly determined — even in the face of the threat of military action — to hang on to its prohibited weapons programmes and to develop others, with all the risks that that posed to peace and security in the region and more widely, including to the national security of the United Kingdom. Iraq has, furthermore, valued its defiance over the well-being of its own people, who have as a consequence endured a decade of sanctions.

Coalition action is therefore now under way to enforce Security Council decisions on complete Iraqi disarmament. This action is being undertaken in a manner that is directed only at the regime that is responsible for this failure to respect the United Nations. We are doing everything possible to minimize the effect on civilians, to leave infrastructure intact and to ensure that the necessary humanitarian assistance reaches the Iraqi people as quickly as possible.

We accept in full our obligations under international humanitarian law. The United Kingdom has already committed $80 million to support humanitarian agencies, including the excellent efforts of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent. A further $300 million has been set aside for the United Kingdom's humanitarian response. In addition to that, the United Kingdom is contributing one fifth of the growing European Union contribution. Coalition engineers are already at work building a water pipeline from Kuwait to distribute supplies in southern Iraq, while a Royal Fleet auxiliary ship will shortly be arriving at Umm Qasr, carrying the first coalition consignment by sea of humanitarian supplies. And I should like to underline that these significant efforts in Iraq will not detract from the funding and the very high priority that we are giving to all other development activity, particularly in Africa.

The action that the United Kingdom is now taking with its coalition partners to uphold United Nations resolutions is both legitimate and multilateral. The use of force is authorized in the current circumstances under Security Council resolutions 678 (1990), 687 (1991) and 1441 (2002). A broad coalition of well over 40 States is supporting this action materially or politically.

We deeply regret the differences within the Security Council that have marked the past few months of discussion on this subject. Now is the time to put those behind us and to unite to ensure that the United Nations and the international community can act quickly to meet the needs of the Iraqi people during and after military action.

Our first priority must be to ensure that the changing realities on the ground in Iraq are reflected in the operation of the oil for food programme, on which 60 per cent of Iraqis remain dependent. Many in this debate have spoken in support of the Secretary-General's proposals on amending the programme. We have made progress within the Council on a draft resolution. We hope that the outstanding issues can be resolved rapidly so that the Secretary-General, as he has requested, has the necessary authority and flexibility to maximize the role of the United Nations in delivering humanitarian relief.

An equal priority, including in the short term — a priority recognized and acted upon by the British Prime Minister as a central plank of British foreign policy — is to restore the Middle East peace process to health. That means both publication and implementation of the road map and progress on security as well as on all other issues. The peace process must not be sidelined because of Iraq, nor must it be promoted only because of Iraq. Justice for the Palestinians, security for Israelis and Palestinians alike, and a comprehensive regional settlement must all be urgent priorities in their own right.

Looking further ahead, we will need to consider carefully the role that the United Nations can play in building a stable and prosperous Iraq. The expertise of the United Nations and that of the international

community will be needed to achieve that result. The United Kingdom is convinced that the United Nations must take a central role in the future of Iraq. The Prime Minister will meet the Secretary-General at United Nations Headquarters later today to discuss precisely that. I sincerely hope that the Council will play its part with responsibility in ensuring a well-functioning Iraq that no longer presents a threat to international peace and security, where people can enjoy their fundamental rights without fear of oppression, and where a representative Government provides effectively for its people and manages natural resources for the exclusive benefit of all the people of Iraq.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker is the representative of Cameroon.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon): (*spoke in French*): Let me first thank the Non-Aligned Movement and the League of Arab States for having taken the initiative to request the convening of this open meeting. We are also pleased that this request has been granted.

Cameroon would like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General for having been present at the opening of our debate, to his personal commitment throughout the management of the Iraqi crisis and his praiseworthy efforts to avoid a tragic denouement with which we are all familiar. My delegation would also like to thank the Secretary-General for the speed with which he put proposals to the Security Council to quickly address the humanitarian tragedy in Iraq. We fully support the Secretary-General.

Cameroon is participating in this new debate on the situation in Iraq, both moved and aware of the seriousness of current circumstances. Despite lengthy months of negotiations and work, the Security Council was unable to prevent the war that broke out exactly one week ago in Iraq. My country regrets and deplores the fact that the Council was unable to reach a consensus in this regard. It is no longer time for us to indulge in recriminations, even if we must acknowledge the fact that we have all failed, either because of our intransigence or our desire to be right at all costs, or our inability to find a compromise.

We have lost many opportunities to stay on the path of peace and have thus dashed many expectations. Even up until Friday, 14 March 2003, six countries who are members of the Security Council, including Cameroon, vainly endeavoured to put forward some middle ground that would have provided a foundation for compromise. Unfortunately their suggestions were not followed. Cameroon's position regarding this crisis has repeatedly been expressed to the Council and elsewhere and I shall not repeat it now.

I would simply like to emphasize that Cameroon is a peace-loving country and intends to remain so. Accordingly, in the international arena Cameroon will continue to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes. Having said this, today is the time for realism and pragmatism, and a way to manage the urgent current difficulties must be found. A response to the humanitarian needs of the people of Iraq is a concern of paramount importance which must take priority.

Last week, Secretary-General Kofi Annan presented some extremely relevant and timely proposals as to the best way to manage the humanitarian crisis that goes hand in hand with this war. Cameroon fully supports those proposals and their implementation.

We consider that the Council must give clear authorization to the Secretary-General to conduct an emergency policy of humanitarian assistance in Iraq, mobilizing all of the United Nations agencies, beginning with the oil for food programme. Cameroon regrets to note the re-emergence of polemics which, without taking into account the suffering and tragedy of the Iraqi people, may make a hostage of the decision-making process in the Security Council. What is of utmost importance is that we intervene in the field. Any politicization of the discussion of how to manage this humanitarian crisis at this very grave moment seems inappropriate at this time.

There will certainly be a proper time to strike a balance sheet of our collective and individual failures on the part of member States of the Security Council. There will also be a time to draw lessons from the management of this international crisis. Cameroon, as is customary, will actively participate in the debate that is certain to take place in this connection. For the time being, we only wish that the conflict come to a speedy conclusion and pray that as few victims as possible result.

We must act as quickly as possible to adopt concerted measures in order to help the distressed Iraqi people. Today we must commit the United Nations to taking on the role of managing the Iraqi humanitarian tragedy. We have failed to prevent war, so let us work

together to restore peace. The major role of the Security Council in maintaining international peace and security will, once again, have meaning. The Iraqi people will find some comfort and the peoples of the United Nations may find new reasons for hope.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker is the representative of the United States of America.

Mr. Negroponte (United States of America): We have listened carefully to our colleagues. We share many of their concerns. We welcome the expressions of support. We join many in looking to the future, to a better Iraq and we disagree profoundly with those who still avoid the central issue.

The responsibility for the current situation lies in the hands of the Iraqi regime, a regime which launched two bloody wars and which has refused for 12 years to give up weapons of mass destruction and join its neighbours in peace. Iraq has repeatedly refused to respond to diplomatic overtures, economic sanctions and other peaceful means designed to bring about Iraqi compliance with its obligations to disarm. The actions that coalition forces are undertaking are an appropriate response. The military campaign in Iraq is not a war against the people of Iraq, but rather against a regime that has denied the will of the international community for more than 12 years.

It was regrettable that the Government of Iraq decided not to take the final opportunity for compliance provided in Security Council resolution 1441 (2002). The coalition response is legitimate and not unilateral. Resolution 687 (1991) imposed a series of obligations on Iraq that were the conditions of the ceasefire. It has long been recognized and understood that a material breach of those obligations removes the basis of the ceasefire and revives the authority to use force under resolution 678 (1990). Resolution 1441 (2002) explicitly found Iraq in continuing material breach. In view of Iraq's additional material breaches, the basis for the existing ceasefire has been removed and the use of force is authorized under resolution 678 (1990).

As President Bush has said, we are acting to compel Iraq's compliance with these resolutions, because the United States, along with a coalition of more than 48 countries, believes that the risk of inaction is too great to tolerate.

I would now like to turn to the efforts being made to provide the most rapid and effective assistance to the Iraqi people. The current humanitarian situation in Iraq is fragile, all the more so as a result of the policies and actions of the Iraqi regime over the last two decades. The United States has been planning, across all relevant United States Government agencies and in support of United Nations efforts, to anticipate likely requirements. We and other members of the coalition are prepared to administer necessary relief as quickly as possible. We have consulted and are continuing to consult with interested Governments, regional and international organizations, civil society and, of course, the United Nations.

We have pre-positioned $16.3 million worth of relief supplies, including water-supply materials, blankets and other shelter items in the region. In addition, we have contributed more than $300 million in food aid and more than $200 million in health and other humanitarian assistance to United Nations agencies, including the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNICEF, the World Food Programme and the World Health Organization, and a multitude of non-governmental organizations. Included in these totals is a $10 million contribution to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

As we increase United States contributions, we also urge other donors to contribute to these critical humanitarian efforts.

We have also fielded the largest ever disaster assistance response team, composed of United States civilian humanitarian experts, to the region to assess needs, liaise with partners and provide in-field grant-making capacity. Forty-eight members of the team are already positioned in Kuwait and additional staff will arrive in the coming days. In fact, such a team conducted an initial assessment of the port of Umm Qasr yesterday. Its initial reports suggest that security is acceptable for more detailed assessment teams to move into the area.

We welcome the 19 March letter from the Secretary-General requesting the necessary authorities to ensure the continuity of the oil for food programme. We fully support his request and we believe the Council is close to agreement on a resolution that responds favourably to the Secretary-General's requests. We trust that other members of the Council

share the objective of resuming the flow of humanitarian goods through the oil for food programme as soon as possible. Progress on this resolution must accelerate, putting political debating points aside, if we are to minimize any interruption of the programme.

There would be serious humanitarian implications for the people of Iraq if the Council fails to do so. Sixty per cent of the people of Iraq rely on oil for food, regardless of the security situation. Insistence on narrow economic interests and extraneous political matters in what essentially constitutes a technical adjustment of a humanitarian resolution would prevent us from giving the Secretary-General the flexibility he needs to begin immediately making arrangements for the urgently needed humanitarian supplies. We urge experts to move swiftly through their discussions and provide the Council with a compromise text as soon as possible.

As the coalition acts to enforce the relevant Security Council resolutions and the international community joins together to meet the humanitarian needs of the people of Iraq, much thought has been given to the future of Iraq. Our thinking is guided by a number of principles. First, we will demonstrate to the people of Iraq and the world that the United States and the coalition aspire to liberate, not to occupy. Secondly, Iraq must be disarmed of all nuclear, chemical and biological weapons production capabilities and the means to deliver such weapons. Thirdly, we must eliminate Iraq's terrorist infrastructure. Fourthly, Iraq must be preserved as a unified State, with its territorial integrity intact. Concern for the safety of Iraq's people has been foremost in our minds from the moment hostilities began. The United States and the coalition allies will provide security to prevent chaos and retribution. Fifthly, along with other partners, we must begin the process of economic and political reconstruction, working to assist the people of Iraq in putting their country on path towards prosperity and freedom.

As President Bush has told the world:

> "We cannot know the duration of this conflict, yet we know the outcome. Unlike Saddam Hussain, we believe the people of Iraq are deserving and capable of human liberty."

Assisting and rebuilding a post-Saddam Iraq will be a huge undertaking. Success will only be possible by working with Iraq's neighbours and the international community. This message was reinforced by President Bush and the leaders of Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom in their statement at the conclusion of the Atlantic Summit on 9 March in the Azores. The four undertook a solemn obligation to help the people of Iraq build a new Iraq at peace with itself and its neighbours. They committed to work in close partnership with international institutions, including the United Nations, our allies and partners and bilateral donors. The statement concluded with a call on the international community to join with us in helping to realize a better future for the people of Iraq.

We want to return control over the sovereignty of Iraq to the people of Iraq as soon as possible. We will stay as long as it is necessary to do this, but not one day more.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): An unprovoked military action has been undertaken, in violation of international law and in circumvention of the Charter, against Iraq, a sovereign State and Member of the United Nations. The toll of casualties and destruction is growing. There is a looming threat of a humanitarian, economic and ecological disaster. The negative consequences of this illegal military action are already having an impact on other countries of the region, the Muslim world and the overall state of international relations.

Russia, together with other States, made vigorous efforts to prevent war and achieve a political settlement of the Iraq problem. The unanimous adoption of resolution 1441 (2002), together with all other measures of exerting pressure on Baghdad, provided a realistic way to disarm Iraq through peaceful means in full keeping with the decisions of the United Nations.

To our profound regret, that possibility was thwarted precisely at a time when Iraq was more actively cooperating with inspectors and when the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission and the International Atomic Energy Agency had submitted their work programmes to the Council. The implementation of those programmes would have made it possible to provide a final and objective answer to the question of whether Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction.

The military action undertaken by the United States and the United Kingdom just at that moment — in violation of Security Council resolutions — cannot

be justified in any way. In fact, those countries were unable to provide any proof to support their allegations regarding Iraq's possession of weapons of mass destruction and Baghdad's support for international terrorism — or with regard to a threat to the countries of the region or to international security emanating from Iraq. I would also like to note that no proof has been found in the course of the ongoing military action to support such accusations.

It is clear to everyone that the use of force against Iraq in an effort to change the political regime of a sovereign State runs totally counter to the fundamental principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations. The entire course of events bears out the Russian Government's assessment of the war in Iraq as a serious political mistake. The military action has already gone beyond the local context. It is not only the population of Iraq that is suffering, so too are the peoples of neighbouring countries. That action has become a potential source of destabilization for the situation in the Middle East, as well as for the world as a whole.

We are also seriously alarmed at the humanitarian situation in Iraq. We support the efforts being made by the Secretary-General, in cooperation with United Nations programmes and funds, to mobilize voluntary contributions to meet the needs of the Iraqi people. Russia is contributing to those efforts, in cooperation with the Governments of the appropriate countries, in particular with those of Iran and Turkey, as well as with the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees. Steps are being taken to provide humanitarian assistance to Iraqi refugees. In particular, a hospital capable of accommodating 5,000 patients will be set up in Iran. Thereafter, another two hospitals will be set up, as well as a refugee camp. In addition, plans are being made to establish refugee camps in Turkey.

I would like in particular to emphasize the need for full compliance with the Fourth Geneva Convention. Under the Convention, the forces occupying Iraq's territory bear responsibility for resolving the humanitarian problems of its people. Of course, all parties must comply with all other norms of international humanitarian law, particularly as they pertain to the treatment of wounded persons and prisoners of war, the protection of civilians and of facilities vital to the population and to preventing the use of excessively injurious materiel.

Bearing in mind the exceptional circumstances in which the Iraqi population finds itself, we are also prepared, along with other members of the Security Council, to resolve the issue of temporary amendments to the procedures followed in the oil for food programme in order to meet the humanitarian needs of Iraqis, given that the programme's international personnel have been evacuated due to the war. However, we will not support the proposal to restructure the mechanism for this humanitarian programme in the light of the military scenario. That is not a technical matter.

While humanitarian issues are important, there is no more urgent task at the moment than to try to halt the war and to return to the path of a political settlement within the context of the Security Council. The overwhelming majority of participants in our debate have spoken out in favour of that. To that end, we will continue to oppose both direct and indirect attempts to legitimize the use of force against Iraq or to shift the responsibility for that action to the international community through the United Nations. That will be our approach to any effort made by the Council with regard to settling the question of Iraq. The fundamental principles that must underpin those efforts were formulated yesterday by the Secretary-General. They include respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Iraq and the inalienable right of the Iraqi people to determine their political future for themselves and to exercise control over their natural resources. I am convinced that no member of the Security Council would really object to those principles.

Russia's leaders are pursuing intensive contacts with a broad range of States, including members of the Security Council, in order to find a political solution to the crisis. Objective conditions to that end still exist. The potential of the United Nations is far from being exhausted, a fact that even those who support the use of force have recognized. We are open to engaging in a dialogue with everyone. We are convinced that differences with regard to the problem of Iraq should not become a pretext to rush to confrontation in world affairs.

However the situation concerning Iraq evolves, we cannot escape the need to search together for effective answers to new threats and challenges and to strengthen the mechanisms of the United Nations that are necessary to do so. The goal of the international

community to find mutually advantageous collective solutions to global problems cannot become hostage to the situation in Iraq. However, the extent to which we can all resolve this problem together, pooling our efforts to minimize the damage caused by that crisis, will directly determine the kind of world in which we shall live in the future — be it a world based on the supremacy of international law or one in which chaos and the arbitrary use of military might prevail. I hope we will all recognize our responsibility vis-à-vis that matter.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): A few days ago, the United States and a few other countries, sidestepping the Security Council, launched military action against Iraq in the face of the opposition of an absolute majority of the international community. Such an action constitutes a violation of the basic principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of international law. War is bound to bring about humanitarian disasters. It has already caused civilian casualties and loss of property in Iraq. War will also have a negative impact on safety, stability and development in the region and beyond. This is a matter of profound concern to us.

The Chinese Government has always advocated a political settlement to the problem of Iraq within the United Nations framework. It has also demanded that the Iraqi Government implement the relevant resolutions of the Security Council in a comprehensive and genuine manner. At the same time, we believe that the international community should respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq.

Security Council resolution 1441 (2002), which was adopted unanimously last November, is an important basis for the political settlement of the question of Iraq. It is the universal view of the international community that achieving the goal of peacefully disarming Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction is possible through the strict implementation of that resolution. China, along with other concerned countries, has made tireless efforts to realize that goal. However, to our profound regret, the weapons inspections being carried out by United Nations inspectors were suspended at a time when they had been making steady progress.

The Security Council is entrusted with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. We are in favour of and support the continued important role of the Security Council on the question of Iraq. At present, the Council is undertaking intensive consultations on a draft resolution concerning the adjustment of the oil for food programme, on the basis of the proposal put forward by Secretary-General Annan, with a view to mitigating the humanitarian emergencies of the Iraqi people.

The Chinese Government has participated in the relevant consultations in a positive and constructive spirit in the hope of achieving a consensus very soon. The humanitarian relief supplies provided by the Chinese Government to Iraqi refugees will be shipped to Jordan in the coming days. China will continue to provide humanitarian assistance within the limits of its capabilities.

Opposition to war and the maintenance of peace are the common aspirations of the world's peoples. The Chinese Government has been consistently committed to the maintenance of international peace and security, advocated the settlement of international disputes by political means and opposed the use or threat of force in international affairs. We strongly call on the countries concerned to halt their military action and to return to the proper path of the political settlement of the Iraqi issue.

Mr. De La Sablière (France) (*spoke in French*): France regrets that military action has been engaged in Iraq without the endorsement of the United Nations. To the very end, in cooperation with the members of the Security Council, the countries of the region and the entire international community, France strove to demonstrate convincingly that the disarmament of Iraq could be achieved through the peaceful means of inspections. We remain convinced that that approach was both correct and viable. These efforts, unfortunately, did not succeed. This conflict will be fraught with consequences for the future.

Our prime concern today is the fate of the civilian population in Iraq. That is why we hope that these military operations will be as rapid and as least deadly as possible and that a prompt end to the conflict will spare Iraq's civilians further suffering. We urge the belligerents to do everything they can to spare human lives. They must scrupulously comply with the rules imposed on them by international humanitarian law, in particular the Geneva Conventions.

France is prepared to meet the humanitarian needs of the Iraqis, in support of the efforts made by the United Nations and the European Union. The international community must mobilize. We recall, however, that the primary responsibility to assist and to meet the basic needs of civilian populations lies, in accordance with international humanitarian law, with the occupying forces in the areas under their control. It is in that context that the Security Council must seek the prompt adoption of a resolution to mobilize efforts urgently to alleviate the humanitarian situation of the Iraqi people, inter alia, through the resumption of the oil for food programme. We hope that we will soon reach agreement on such a text and that it will be adopted shortly.

France reiterates its commitment to the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq. These principles are enshrined in the Charter and were recalled in resolution 687 (1991) and subsequent resolutions. They must be fully respected. Accordingly, we call on the countries of the region to refrain from any initiative that would further exacerbate the situation. The sovereignty of Iraq belongs to the Iraqis. The Iraqis must remain masters of the future of their country. These principles must be taken into account forthwith in order to facilitate a settlement to the crisis that respects the framework they define.

The re-establishment of lasting peace will be possible only in a collective context, in which the United Nations must be central. As soon as the situation permits, the United Nations will have to be allowed to exercise its full responsibility, in strict respect for its independence. It will have to verify the disarmament of Iraq, as required by the resolutions in force. It will have to help the Iraqi people to regain control over its destiny and to choose its future.

Faithful to these principles, France will continue to act to ensure that crises which threaten international peace and security find fair solutions through collective action in the framework of the United Nations.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Saddam Hussain's repeated non-compliance over the past 12 years with his obligation to eliminate his weapons of mass destruction — as set forth in many resolutions of the Security Council and most recently in resolution 1441 (2002), which gave Iraq one last chance to disarm — has compelled an international coalition, which includes my country, to take enforcement action to achieve that disarmament.

Spain and other members of the Security Council used to the maximum all available diplomatic resources to achieve the disarmament of Iraq by peaceful means. Resolution 1441 (2002) and its reference to others adopted by this Council supported the legality of the action undertaken by the coalition. We want military operations to end as soon as possible, with a minimum loss of human life.

Spain fully agrees with the conclusions of the recent Council of Europe, which highlighted its commitment to maintaining the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Iraq, respect for human rights and the rights of minorities, and disarmament. The conclusions also emphasized the primary role of the United Nations. We also defend the indisputable right of the Iraqis to determine their political future and to control and dispose of their natural resources.

The highest priority for Spain at this time is the Iraqi population and the provision of humanitarian assistance as a matter of the utmost urgency. Spain has offered assistance to alleviate the consequences of the situation in Iraq, valued at €34 million and earmarked for United Nations programmes, the Red Cross, other non-governmental organizations and the countries neighbouring Iraq to ease the situation of refugees.

Moreover, Spain feels that the Security Council must adopt a pragmatic approach by allowing the United Nations and its Secretary-General the broadest possible room for manoeuvring in meeting the humanitarian needs that arise and, to that end, by making the oil for food programme flexible. In any case; humanitarian assistance must reach those to whom it is provided as soon as possible. This is a matter of urgency.

It would be incomprehensible if, because of differences in the Security Council arising from political considerations of one kind or another, we were to deprive hundreds of thousands of human beings of aid that in many cases is vital to their survival. The spectacle of a Council bogged down for days by some political nuance would not be understood, nor would it be very edifying or contribute to the prestige of this organ or the United Nations. Humanitarian assistance cannot wait.

After the divergences of recent months, the Council should now recover its unity on this pressing question. But the Security Council and the United Nations have before them other outstanding challenges of extraordinary importance that must be promptly addressed once the current crisis is overcome. I am referring to the question of the Middle East — a tragic, anguishing and unsustainable situation which, through the accusations of double standards, fuels misunderstanding and the understandable frustration of the population of that area. The serious implementation of the road map is a necessary and urgent step for achieving the establishment of two viable, respected States living in peace.

Mr. Valdés (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We have listened most attentively to approximately 80 delegations, which have expressed their views on the situation in Iraq at this open meeting of the Security Council, convened thanks to the League of Arab States and the Non-Aligned Movement. Chile can only understand the somber and depressed atmosphere that has been so clearly expressed in so many of the statements made yesterday and today. Our position as a member of the Security Council, is known by all Members of the Organization. Up to the very last minute, together with other members of the Council, we promoted a peaceful solution, convinced that it was possible and that it was the best approach, both for the international community and for the countries directly involved in the conflict.

For a week now, we have been meeting in the Council Chamber, and have then walked through the corridors and rooms of the United Nations, surrounded by television screens that display the horrible images of war, like accusatory eyes reminding us that we could have and should have done more. Today, however, it seems urgent that we devote ourselves to looking to the future, especially the future of the United Nations.

I would like to start with a general observation. My country values multilateralism, not just as a convenient, available option but as a necessary and indispensable requisite that is part of our identity as a sovereign nation, our democratic ideals and our geographical dimension and location.

That is why we accord a vital role to the United Nations. We admire how, over the past 50 years, the United Nations has contributed to regulating relations among States and to a very broad range of humanitarian activities. Though imperfect, defective and frequently bureaucratic, no one can deny the irreplaceable role it has played in protecting the security of persons and in promoting peace and sustainable development. Over the last 50 years, it has dealt with many crises and challenges to its authority and relevance. After each crisis, as soon as the dust has settled, the principle actors have returned to the United Nations. All have recognized in the end that in it lies our sole source of international legitimacy and legality.

Yet, we should not think that these resources are inexhaustible. Immersed as we all are in a globalized world, faced with a situation that will define the shape of our international system for many decades, we believe that the risks the United Nations is now facing are great. That is why we fully agree with the Secretary-General: this is the time for the members of the Council to make a special effort to bring their positions closer together and to resume a dialogue that restores the Organization's capacity to act.

Our effort should be patiently aimed at finding those principles that unite us, in a deliberate attempt to find the common ground that made it possible two years ago for the Council and the United Nations as a whole to adopt a unanimous position in the fight against terrorism.

We could start with the proposals made yesterday in the Council by the Secretary-General when he signalled the two principles that should guide our decisions on the future of Iraq.

> "The first principle is respect for Iraq's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence. The second ... is respect for the right of the Iraqi people to determine their own political future and control their own natural resources."

We hope that those principles can contribute to uniting the members of the Council and to orienting us in taking the very difficult decisions awaiting us in the very near future.

Today, we should devote ourselves to resolving the humanitarian situation in Iraq. Chile supports a pragmatic, flexible and urgent approach to the proposals of the Secretary-General on this issue. The information that the Council has in its possession leads one to think that if the Council does not adopt a resolution on this issue in the next two or three days,

we will have to grieve over the greatest humanitarian catastrophe that the United Nations has ever faced. We have hope that work to produce a draft resolution acceptable to all will be successful in a very short time. But the Council must give its support to all initiatives to stabilize and to assist a region so greatly afflicted by the disasters of war.

Chile maintains its hope that the proposals for a road map which, it was announced by President Bush, was recently submitted to the Palestinian and Israeli parties, will make it possible to achieve headway on an issue that is so central and crucial to international peace and security. The creation of a Palestinian State coexisting in peace with the State of Israel is an issue to which Chile attaches the greatest priority, and to which the Council must devote all its energy.

As do all in the Chamber, my country desires a cessation of hostilities in Iraq. We call for the full implementation of the Geneva Conventions and respect for international humanitarian law on the part of both parties. We express our regret at the death of civilians and soldiers. Both bring mourning to families both here and elsewhere. We express our condolences at the violence that continues to morally mutilate the lives of so many thousands of children because it leaves them forever incapable of harbouring the hope that civilized life is possible.

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria) (*spoke in French*): As an associate country of the European Union, Bulgaria supports the statement made yesterday by the Permanent Representative of Greece on behalf of the European Union.

I would like to make a few comments in my national capacity. Bulgaria very much regrets that the diplomatic efforts of the international community to disarm Iraq by peaceful means did not produce the hoped for results. In recent months, my delegation defended in the Council a clear, consistent position for the full implementation of resolution 1441 (2002). My country made every possible effort to find a compromise among the various approaches within the Security Council in order to preserve the Council's unity.

Military action turned out to be the last recourse for disarming Iraq. We confirm our position because Iraq was in clear breach of its disarmament obligations. The Government of Iraq is the sole party responsible for the serious consequences that it is now suffering. The Baghdad authorities did not take their last chance to comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly resolution 1441 (2002).

My country appeals to all parties involved in the conflict to strictly comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law regarding civilians and prisoners of war. Bulgaria believes that the international community should not give up its responsibility to Iraq. To the contrary, it should make every necessary effort at the humanitarian and financial levels to rebuild the country following the conflict.

The main task we face is to provide urgent humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi people, including to refugees in neighbouring countries. Bulgaria is prepared to participate in this effort. My country expresses its gratitude to the Secretary-General and to the United Nations humanitarian organizations for the steps they have taken to ease the suffering of the Iraqi people. We believe that the Security Council should adopt as soon as possible — if possible, tomorrow — a resolution on humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people, which should adjust the oil for food programme and expand the Secretary-General's authority in that area.

Reaching an agreement on this subject is particularly important for the unity of the Security Council and to reinforce its credibility. My country unreservedly supports the proposals, put forward in the Council by the Secretary-General, to adapt the programme to the current situation on the ground. Acting effectively, and particularly with speed, is essential right now. The Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, with his moral and political prestige, is the best possible guarantor that such action can be successful. The Council must give him the flexibility he requires to achieve this task.

As soon as the coalition's military operation is over, every necessary effort will have to be made to safeguard Iraq's territorial integrity, facilitate the emergence of democratic institutions, establish genuine rule of law and promote the country's return to the community of free States. This process should logically lead to the lifting of sanctions against Iraq and the restoration of normal political and economic conditions for the Iraqi people. The matter of rebuilding the Iraqi society after the conflict should be resolved with the assistance of the United Nations, with respect for the right of the Iraqi people to determine their political

future and to exercise full control over their natural resources.

Continued monitoring of weapons of mass destruction is particularly important. Monitoring must be carried out through the resumption in due course of the mandate of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission and the adaptation of its work programme to new circumstances.

Despite the undesirable turn that events have taken in Iraq, Bulgaria still hopes that the United Nations will remain at the core of the international order and that the Security Council will continue to assume the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and the reconstruction of Iraq after the conflict.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The United States of America and the United Kingdom carried out their threats to initiate a war of aggression against Iraq, circumventing international legitimacy. The United Nations, international legitimacy, international law and all institutions of international cooperation that were specifically created following the Second World War have engaged in an intense debate on the real capacity to stop the strong when they attack the weak and on the possibility of imposing their resolutions on the strong when the particular interests of the strong run counter to the interests of the international community and to peace and security in the world.

During the debates at the highest level, particularly in the Security Council, Syria warned of the danger of overlooking Council resolutions. We have stressed that there is no legal or moral justification for waging this war against the Iraqi people. We have also cautioned that unilateral action by the United States and its circumvention of the will of the international community, as represented in the Security Council, would lead to grave consequences, particularly to division and chaos in international relations. Such consequences would arise because of the harm done to international legitimacy and to the credibility and role of the Council in achieving international peace and security, for which it was created, and because the logic of military force, hegemony and diktat are being imposed on international relations, instead of democracy and mutual respect.

What is most regrettable is not just that a State with tremendous military power has attacked a country weakened by sanctions and an embargo imposed on it for more than 12 years. Rather, what is really regrettable is the collapse of a system of values to which the international community has agreed, whether it concerns the use of military force or respect for international humanitarian law. That system that began to crystallise at the end of the nineteenth century and evolved to a high degree, which we all see today. The aggression that the United States of America has introduced into the twenty-first century will be recorded by history as a black page, because the United States has turned its back and has closed its ears to the appeals of international public opinion, which said no to war.

The war is an act of defiance of the Security Council itself, the great majority of whose members refused to adopt another resolution. They all demanded respect for Council resolutions, particularly resolution 1441 (2002). They called for the continued activities of international inspectors based on the proactive cooperation shown by Iraq, as reflected in the reports of the inspectors submitted to the Security Council.

This war is not justifiable because it is not aimed at the elimination of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. The inspectors have stressed that there is no evidence of the existence of such weapons. The objective is to occupy Iraq, to subject the region to hegemony and exploitation, and to help Israel — which does possess weapons of mass destruction and perpetrates war crimes against the Palestinian people — continue its occupation and defy the will of international legitimacy.

At their meeting that concluded two days ago in Cairo, Arab foreign ministers condemned the Anglo-American attack against Iraq. They stressed the solidarity of Arab States with Iraq and their support for Iraq in facing up to aggression.

Syria wishes to underline the statement issued by the Arab foreign ministers, particularly their call for an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Anglo-American invading troops from Iraqi territory, and its belief that those forces should bear the brunt of the material, legal and moral aftermath of this aggression.

Could the world, which not that long ago emerged from the quagmire of the cold war, have imagined that the alternative would be the people of

Iraq, including the children, rushing to shelters, many dying and others losing their homes in Umm Qasr, Baghdad, Mosul, Nasiriyah and Najaf? Who could have imagined that the values of democracy, on which the American and other peoples have been schooled, would translate into bombs and fires, burning innocent civilians in various parts of Iraq?

Could the Syrian workers who were fleeing the flames of battle in major Iraqi cities — 5 of whom were killed and more than 10 wounded — have imagined that American warplanes would come from afar, without justification, to kill and wound them, merely because they were seeking safety and security for themselves and for their families?

Some have attempted to mislead the world, claiming that the wars they will wage this century will be "clean" wars. But when has killing and destruction ever been clean? War is war, and has been since the beginning of history. People have an increasing hatred of such wars when they are waged without legal document, in flagrant defiance of international law and humanity.

Our fear is that the victory sought by the United States of America will come at the expense of the blood of thousands of Iraqi innocents, for whose benefit, the United States claims, the war is being waged, in order to rescue or liberate them. But who gave the United States and others any such right?

The urgent humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people are a pressing issue that must be taken up. Syria will make every effort to do so. Nevertheless, humanitarian aspects must not be exploited by some for narrow political gain or for the purpose of misleading international public opinion and diverting its attention away from the central issue — an end to aggression and an immediate withdrawal of the invading forces.

Syria urges the Security Council to make every effort to put an end to this destructive war and to prevent it from reaping the lives of more Iraqi and non-Iraqi innocent citizens. We call on the Security Council to take up this grave situation, because the Council is the essential point of reference in such difficult international circumstances. It must call on the aggressor immediately to withdraw its forces from Iraq, to respect international legitimacy and international humanitarian law, and in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention, and to put an end to the policy of destroying the infrastructure that was built by Iraqis with their sacrifice and sweat.

Syria calls for a return to international legitimacy and for respect for international law under the auspices of the United Nations and the Security Council. We urge that international issues be dealt with in a just and balanced manner. We must condemn the double standards that are used in dealing with international issues, in particular that of ending the Israeli occupation of Arab land and the peaceful resolution of the Iraqi issue.

The logic of force, unilateralism and hegemony will certainly not lead humanity to the future to which we all aspire.

Mr. Pieuger (Germany): My delegation fully supports the position of the European Union, as presented yesterday by the Greek Presidency.

The Security Council comes together in difficult times. The war in Iraq is a tragedy for those affected and for all of us. While we speak, men, women and children, civilians and soldiers alike, are suffering from its tragic consequences. The Security Council cannot remain silent in this situation.

We deeply regret that our intensive efforts to achieve a peaceful solution through this Council did not succeed. I think that Germany and other members of the Security Council made constructive proposals that were conducive to reaching our common goal — the peaceful disarmament of Iraq.

But now we have to face the reality of war. However, as Foreign Minister Fischer highlighted recently, this is not the time for accusations or apportioning blame. Our focus should now be on the future and on the immediate challenges for the international community.

The foremost and most important challenge is, of course, bringing this war to an end as soon as possible. But while it continues, we call upon all parties to the conflict to assume their responsibilities under international humanitarian law, especially the Geneva conventions. Prisoners of war in particular have to be treated in compliance with it.

We are deeply concerned about the plight of the Iraqi people and the imminent threat of a humanitarian disaster. Even before the war, the Iraqi people depended to a very large extent on the oil for food

programme, which is now suspended. As the Secretary-General pointed out yesterday, the primary responsibility for meeting their needs now falls on the belligerents who control the territory. However, the international community and the humanitarian agencies of the United Nations, for their part, must do everything possible to avert a humanitarian disaster. Germany stands ready to contribute in this regard. Furthermore, as we now hold the presidency of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 661 (1990), we are actively involved in the ongoing efforts to adapt the oil for food programme to the new situation.

We have heard from the Secretary-General that, before the war, 80 per cent of the food basket in Iraq came from the oil for food programme. Sixty per cent of the population depends on that programme 100 per cent, and other people are also dependent on it. Therefore we must make sure that the necessary adaptations are made in order to get the programme, which has been stopped, going again as soon as the situation on the ground allows it. We hope that the Council will regain its unity of purpose by adopting a resolution on this issue as quickly as possible. I will introduce a draft resolution shortly that I hope will find unanimous support in the Council.

Germany is convinced that the United Nations and the Security Council must continue to play the central role in the resolution of the Iraq crisis. We fully concur with the Secretary-General that the two guiding principles on which this resolution must be based are, first, respect for its sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence, and, secondly, the right of the Iraqi people to overcome their isolation, determine their own future and use their natural resources to their own benefit. For its part, Germany will actively contribute to the future work of the Security Council on this matter. In the light of numerous international crises and challenges, we see a need to restore the unity of the international community and of the Security Council.

The United Nations, in our view, is the key institution for the preservation of peace and stability and for the peaceful reconciliation of interests in the world of today and tomorrow. The war in Iraq cannot call into question the foundations of the rules-based system of collective security provided for by the Charter of the United Nations. The Security Council bears, and will continue to bear, primary responsibility for world peace and international security. There is no substitute for the Council's function as a guardian of peace.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Guinea.

This meeting is being held at a particularly serious time. My country, which until the end believed in a peaceful solution to the crisis, profoundly regrets that the Council itself was unable to rise above its divisions in order to adopt a common approach. However, the tragic reality that we are now witnessing with apprehension is challenging all of us. At this stage, it is not the time for recriminations.

My delegation, which has always called for Council unity, believes that this situation is so grave that we must all demonstrate responsibility in order to overcome the new challenges. In the days to come, we must together strive to search for ways and means to restore the unity of this body so as to give it the effectiveness and dynamism it requires. More than ever before, it is urgent that we set aside our differences and concentrate on what is now essential: the fate of the Iraqi people, confronted by a new trial.

Several days after the unleashing of hostilities, the international community is questioning the effectiveness of the Security Council, which, nonetheless, initiated many actions aimed at a positive resolution of the Iraqi question. However, we understand the concerns expressed during this debate.

It was in that context that the Security Council immediately agreed to hold this meeting, providing an opportunity for all Member States that wished to express themselves on this issue to do so. The negotiations under way for the adoption of a draft resolution based on Iraq's urgent humanitarian needs, on the basis of the proposals made by the Secretary-General, are also noteworthy.

In that regard, the risk of a humanitarian catastrophe that the Iraqi population now faces is a source of concern for my delegation. Far be it from us to debate the merits of any war, but this one undoubtedly affects a population already harshly affected by several years of sanctions. Furthermore, the suspension of the activities of the oil for food programme highlights the precariousness of the situation, given that more than 60 per cent of the

population was highly dependent on it in terms of essential provisions.

I wish to reaffirm my country's attachment to the central role of the United Nations in managing international relations, particularly in preserving international peace and security. We support the Secretary-General's appeal to Member States to mobilize the necessary financial resources to tackle the urgent new situation prevailing on the ground and to relieve the suffering of the traumatized Iraqi people.

In conclusion, as we express the hope for a swift end to the war, we hope that it will have the lowest possible number of victims, that the civilian population will be spared and that damage to the economic and social infrastructure will be limited.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The representative of Iraq has requested the floor to make another statement.

Mr. Aldouri (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to express my sincere thanks to the majority of Member States of the United Nations, whose honourable voices have expressed their views and those of their people and their Governments with regard to the need of putting an end to this aggressive war as a violation of international law, moral values and the Charter of the United Nations.

As I listened to a number of voices of those who are misled or who have misled others, which declared that they have joined the camp of war and aggression, in opposition to the United Nations and its Charter, I am fully aware that they have spoken not because their people wanted them to do so, but because of reasons that are well known to everyone. The warnings that the United States has made to many other Member States have reached us and everyone else present here. I believe that the United States used a carrot-and-stick policy in order to intimidate or entice smaller States to make them do its bidding. I understand that some other States whose military bases are now being occupied by hundreds of thousands of American soldiers have also been coerced and have no other choice but to obey the orders of the United States.

What I have just said is a general comment; I have two other comments to make.

My first comment concerns statements on the humanitarian aspect, to which we have all listened. I believe that I cannot disregard the inhuman effects of the aggression against Iraq. We all know what is going on there in terms of killing and destruction of the infrastructure, the economy and the agricultural system, as well as deprivation of basic provisions, particularly medicine. We cannot disregard this issue, but it has been represented from two points of view: a purely humanitarian perspective — and I congratulate all States that have begun to think seriously about it, because it is a very serious issue, and all of humanity will bear responsibility for it if they do not move quickly to provide assistance to Iraq — and from another perspective, represented by the United States and the United Kingdom, which from the very beginning wanted to put this issue before the world in order to mislead it, distract it and alter its views concerning the main issue, which is that of war and aggression.

The United States wanted to legitimize its aggressive, criminal military action against Iraq after it had lost its legitimacy, owing to its inability to persuade a majority of Security Council members to adopt its criminal draft resolution. Therefore, it has tried to use another way to achieve its objectives, and I think it is a British plan, because the British are well known for their trickery. As I listened today to the representatives of the United States and the United Kingdom, the stance of both countries seemed to be that they are shedding tears over Iraq and that what really interests them is Iraq's future. I do not know how they accept this — they kill someone, shed crocodile tears over him and then attend his funeral.

What is said today reminds me of what General Maude said in 1917, and I referred to it in a previous statement. British General Maude came to Iraq in 1917. He faced the people of Baghdad and said, "I come to you as a liberator, not a conqueror." Britain then stayed in Iraq from 1917 until 1958. Today, the new colonialists come and tell us they have come as liberators, not as conquerors, and will need some time to withdraw. If the Security Council does not pay attention to the term "some time", we will know the reality of the American-British neo-colonialism in Iraq.

The United States concluded contracts to rebuild the infrastructure of Iraq in 1997. Six years ago they had commercial industrial contracts with companies that some members of the American Administration

supervise; in fact, you can find these contracts on the Internet. Some of them are to rebuild the oil industry infrastructure, which is the basic reason for the war, some are for rebuilding the infrastructure of the ports, and others for rebuilding the infrastructure of Iraqi industry.

I apologize to all those States that participated with the United States in this vision and in the aggression, such as Spain, Bulgaria and many other small States, because they will get nothing from the cake, if Iraq falls. This "cake" was pre-planned by the United States and the United Kingdom even before Iraq entered Kuwait in 1991. The contracts are safeguarded and the companies have been preparing themselves for many years, but officially these contracts were concluded in 1997. Today the carrot is provided to those many States which, regrettably, are contravening the values and principles of the United Nations in following the caravan of war and aggression.

The last point I would like to make is that Iraq has not crossed the Atlantic to attack America and in fact has no connection with whatever occurred in the United States in September 2001. Despite the fact that we have no weapons of mass destruction, the United States armed forces have crossed the Atlantic Ocean by the hundreds of thousands — and they are preparing hundreds of thousands of other soldiers, because their forces have been defeated — in order to finish off Iraq and to control the region.

The warning I would like to make to the members of the Security Council is that the United States and the United Kingdom were hoodwinked when they were told that the Iraqi people will receive them with flowers and embraces and adulations, that the children and their mothers will come and rejoice at the coming of the United States forces. What happened is that the Iraqi army, until now, has not confronted the United States forces. The Iraqi people — the women, students, peasants — are facing the American and British forces in Iraq today. Therefore, when the United States found itself facing fierce resistance by the Iraqi people, who are keen on their independence, security and sovereignty, and since they realized that the Arab people and Muslim people and people all over the world support Iraq and call upon it to resist, the United States has started to destroy the Iraqi people.

Yesterday the United States destroyed 200 houses in one suburb of Nasiriyah, and they have continued to destroy residential areas in A'zamiyah and Yarmook, in Baghdad and many poor suburbs in Basra. We do not know what the future holds for us. The United States will destroy the Iraqi people because the Iraqis hate it and because the Iraqi people will resist and will pay the price in blood in order to get the United States out of Iraq.

The Iraqi people will defend the principles of the United Nations and the principles of peace and security. Therefore I call upon the Security Council to take notice that the United States and Great Britain and Australia are about to start a real war of extermination that will kill and destroy everything. Then, regret will be of no use. If the humanitarian issue is very important then halting the war is more important, as it is the cause of this deteriorating humanitarian situation.

I call upon all of you to move towards taking a resolution to halt the war, to halt the aggression, to rid the Iraqi people of what they are facing.

Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to tell the entire international community that Iraq is committed to the Geneva Conventions and the provisions of international humanitarian law. They will see no harm from Iraq except self-defence — defence of its people, its dignity, sovereignty and independence.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.50 p.m.